

MEMOIRS,

OR

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

OF

ELISABETH WEST: 5

Written by her own Hand. 17

Pfal. xxxii. 7. *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy; for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities:*

Ver. 8. *And hast not put me up into the hand of the enemy; thou hast set my feet in a large room.*

Ver. 9. *O! how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men.*



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PREFACE TO THE READER.

THE salvation of our precious and immortal souls being so much the concern of mankind, that what hath a tendency to promote it, cannot but be very acceptable to all those who seriously think upon the infinite importance of a future state: It is with this view that I have published the following sheets, which contain the spiritual exercises of that pious and devout Christian, Elisabeth West; a book which, I think, needs not a letter of recommendation from any, and therefore I decline to speak any thing in praise of it: only I must here observe,

First, That this, amongst others, is a convincing evidence of the veracity of the holy Spirit's operations on the heart of men; and those, who make a jest of these sacred truths, may come and see what God hath done for the soul of this elect saint. Can any, who seriously reads these papers, say, that it is all delusion and enthusiastic fancy? Can you imagine, that mere fancy could produce such real and solid joy; or that the best part of her life should be a continued dream of the manifestations and hidings of God's countenance! is it not evident that the holy Spirit of Truth dwelt in her heart; and that God sometimes indeed made the light of his countenance to shine upon her, and at other times withdrew his holy presence? But, yet the profane, ignorant world say what they will, who can no more judge of the nature of this inward sensation, than a deaf man of sounds, or a blind man of colours; yet this the saints feel and experience.

Secondly, I must likewise observe, that though, she being illiterate, it cannot be expected that her stile should be altogether so exact and just as may be desired; yet, methinks, an easy and unaffected simplicity shines through the whole; which, I humbly judge, may sufficiently atone for that fault, if I may call it one: and yet we ought to look more seriously into these spiritual cases she relates, than, with a criticising eye, to search out faults, which, even in many well written pieces, will not be ill to be found.

This book is exactly copied from the original manuscript: it hath been desired by many pious and judicious Christians who have perused the same, and hath often been transcribed; which also made me hope, that the publishing of it would not be unacceptable.

Now, that the reading of these sheets may be followed with a blessing, that so the saints may be built up in their most holy faith, and sinners be converted to Christ, is the hearty prayer of one who is,

Reader,

Your soul's Well-wisher.

THE
EXERCISES
OF
ELISABETH WEST.

PSAL. lxvi. 16.

*Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what
he hath done for my soul.*

THOUGH I cannot tell the time and place, when and where, the Lord did me first good; yet this I know, that he began with me very early, when I was young in years, to incline my heart to seek the Lord. I wanted not good education from my mother, and likewise from my aunt, who was a godly woman, and took much pains on me. When I was conversing with my comrades, I would be telling them what my mother was saying to me, That if I were good, I would get heaven. Now, thought I, heaven was such a place, where I would get fine clothes, and every thing that was brave and bonny.

This so allured me, that I could been content to do any thing to get heaven: I resolved, I would neither swear nor lie, nor do any thing that was ill; but I would pray and seek the Lord, then I would be sure to get to heaven; yet I found a strong inclination in my heart to break all my resolutions: for, the first temptation that came in my way to sin, I embraced it cheerfully. I was extraordinarily given to play of all sorts, which took my heart wholly up, so that I thought it a melancholy thing to be religious; but, when I had gone to my bed I would think, what if I go to hell, where I will never come out? That word never, wrought strongly on me; but the remedy I took to still my conscience was, I would say my prayers I learned at the school; then I was well enough. I cannot dis-

tinently give an account how I spent my time: for some years I satisfied myself with the Pharisee's religion, that I was not so ill as others; but, in the Lord's own time, when he was pleased to send the gospel among us at the revolution, then I began more serious-like to seek the Lord; I left off my form of prayer, and betook me to another way which I thought would please God better. I was, for a considerable time, under the ministry of Mr William Erskine: all that I can observe, during the time he preached among us, was, that I attained to a great delight in hearing the word, which wrought upon my affections, that I durst not neglect secret prayer; where sometimes I would be very tender, and shed some tears, then I thought there was no doubt but I was converted. It pleased the Lord to remove this faithful servant by death.

Then I frequently heard great Mr James Kirkton with a great deal of delight; for his sermons were very taking and good for the memory; the which I had been telling to others, they commended me; so I gained a great deal of applause with those among whom I conversed. This pleased me extremely, though I knew never what it was to make application of any thing I heard. O how great reason have I to wonder and admire at the goodness of the Lord, that did not send me to the pit in this selfish condition! seeking justification by works, never remembering what I was by nature. In this case I remained until it pleased the Lord to send Mr George Meldrum to be our minister, in place of Mr William Erskine, who was the Lord's messenger to me indeed: the first time I heard him I thought I felt something I never felt before, but knew not what it was: that word was made out to me, Hos. xi. 1, 2, 3. He preached on these words, Josh. xxiv. 15. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Where he besought us earnestly with tears that we should choose presently whom we should serve. He said, "Many will say, I will do that afterwards; but few will say, I will choose presently. He protested, he would not go out of the pulpit till we would give our consent presently to the bargain without delay." If I right remember, this was the first time that ever I could observe the Lord speaking to me in public. At this time I thought the Lord made me willing in a day of his power to choose and consent to serve the Lord. O that I may never forget this day!

After this there arose some fears on my spirit, that the Lord did not regard any thing I did; I thought my pray-
ere

are were lost, for I could observe no answer; then that word came to me, Heb. xiii. 5. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." But, I now knowing there was such a word in the Bible, it yielded me some small comfort; this being the first time that ever my ears were opened to hear Christ preached in such a manner as now God eminently helped him to preach, and me to hear. At this time he told us, "That all our prayers were rejected by God, unless they were first put into the hands of Jesus Christ; and that, if we had not a saving uptaking of Christ in his natures as God-man, and in his offices as prophet, priest, and King, in every duty, it could not be accepted by God." Then I was struck with astonishment: For I was persuaded, that never a duty I had performed was accepted; for I never employed Christ to any. Now it was not in one preaching or two that he delivered these truths, but distinctly he preached on every one of them from several texts of scripture; such as, Gal. iv. 4, 5. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, Matth. i. 21. And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins, Acts iii. 22. A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me, him shall ye hear. And whosoever will not hear this prophet, shall be cut off from among the people, Psal. ii. 6. I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion, Heb. vii. 26. Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." O what love and desire was wrought in my heart after Christ, the time that these words were opened up, when I heard what he had done and suffered for poor sinners! yea, Jesus won my heart to himself by love. Our minister also held forth the sufferings of Christ, from John iii. 14, 15. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." He not only preached to us on the sufferings of Christ, of which I never heard the like before (for I thought every sentence was a wonder, and was backed with the power of God), but also he made offers of that Christ to all that would receive him: this was the blesseddest news that ever I heard. Likewise he offered the cross, with all the circumstances thereof, to every one that had received Christ; to which my heart gave consent

to take Christ with cross and loss whatsoever, and that cheerfully, without any hanker in my heart.

After this I found corruption begin to stir in me ; but, whatever troubled me, I got it spoken to on the Sabbath day, which struck me with wonder. I several times resorted to Mr Meldrum, and told him my case, (though very confusedly), his converse to me was both meek and comfortable ; but, particularly, he exhorted me to keep a record of all the Lord's dealings with my soul, (if I could write.) I thought this a strange command ; but I heard the same exhortation from Mr John Flint at Lallwade, on these words, Isa. xlv. 5. ' One shall say, I am the Lord's : ' and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord.' This being on a communion-sabbath, he exhorted every one to write with their hands to be the Lord's. I would fain have put this exhortation in practice, but knew not how to begin ; it being presently before the sacrament in Edinburgh, which was the first after the revolution, and the first ever I was partaker of.

ON THE FAST DAY.

Edinburgh, August 9. 1694.

I AM here this day, O Lord, to go about a great work, which I am not capable of ; therefore I desire thy assistance. The thing I go to begin with is, to enter into covenant with thee ; and I desire, Lord, that thou wouldst consent to the bargain. Say not to me, as in Psal. li. 16. ' What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth ? ' but though thou shouldst say the same to me thou art right, but I will plead upon thy own word, Mat. xi. 28. ' Come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' O Lord, I know not any thing that is so loading to me as thy absence, not knowing the cause thereof, and the sin that keeps thee from covenanting with me. I shall desire to say with Job, xxxiv. 32. ' That which I see not, teach thou me ; and, if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.' O Lord I have thy promise, and I will come in thy favour and plead that my sins may be blotted out for Christ's sake ; and give me leave to come to thy holy table, to get my longing desires granted. I take heaven and earth to witness, that I desire thy love before all the riches in the world : help me this day to prepare for a covenant betwixt me and thee ; for I am very unfit of myself to do this great work : if thou had not said in thy word, that all that are willing to come to thee, thou art willing to entertain.

Now

Now, O Lord, I beg that, in thy goodness, thou wouldst have mercy upon me, and let not this be an unfit fast-day; but take glory to thyself; and be not angry with this that I am writing; for it is to shew my willingness to the bargain. O Lord, I beseech thee, be not approaching to me at thy table in anger; but in favour bestow thy mercy on me; yet I think, before thou be absent at such a time, I would rather thou wouldst come with rebukes, (if not in fury) to me; for I long to be in thy company. I cannot express my unfitness to come to thy table, but I will cast myself on thy mercy, as queen Esther, when she was going to the king; I will go, and if I perish, it shall be at thy feet.

The Saturday following, being a day of preparation for the sacrament, when my vows were made, and promises to the Lord: O Lord, most holy and gracious, to whom all praise is due; I here this day avouch myself to thee, on the terms of the covenant. Hear, O Lord, I intend in thy strength to walk humbly all the days of my life; as thou wast humble in all things, both in thy birth and during thy abode in this world, so I intend to do; and as thou wast mocked, bruised, and crucified for my sins, and yet bore it patiently; here I profess I shall be patient in all things thou castest in my way, be what it will; as thou wast not angry at them that despised thee, but prayed for them; so help me never to be angry at any thing, though it were never so great an offence to me, in scoffs and mocks, for thy name's sake; except it be, that thou be offended at it! And as thou walkedst all thy days in poverty, and not in pomp and honour, who many times wanted where to lodge or lay thy head; so help me to be content with my lot in this world, were it never so mean; if thou be my portion, I have enough. I here this day promise to renounce all lusts and idols, and give my heart to thee; all which I shall seal to-morrow at thy table.

Edinburgh, August 11. 1694.

I HAVE this day taken thy sacrament, and sworn myself to be the Lord's at the table where Mr John Anderson served. O Lord, make me a real servant of thine, and keep Satan from tempting me to sin; for thou art my God, and I am thy servant solemnly sworn to thee. O put some work of thine in mine hand, to do for thee in my day and generation. Lord, help me to perform every thing in the strength of Christ; this is all the desire of thy sworn servant,

E. WEST.

After

After this I could do nothing but wonder and admire at the love of God in Christ Jesus; for my interest in Christ was so cleared up to me, that there remained no doubt in my heart to the contrary. O, but my heart was full of joy, so that I can neither express it with tongue nor pen! There were songs of praise put in my mouth, on the consideration of the right that I had to God through the purchase of Christ's death and sufferings, which made me enter on my way rejoicing and triumphing. All things were made easy for me, though otherwise difficult; especially the cross of Christ, I thought, I could heartily embrace; a gibbet, a stake to be burnt at, was nothing to me. I thought nothing could trouble me, when I thought on what Christ was made to me. O what can make a Christian's way difficult! What though the devil tempt me to misbelieve? I can answer him with the promises; what though I meet with afflictions? a crown of glory will make up for all. When I had been with my comrades, if they had been complaining, I wondered at them, and would chide them; what can ail you to complain that have heard of Christ? are ye ignorant? he is a prophet. Are you overcome with your enemies? he is a king, he is all things to his people. The truth is, I thought there was not a difficulty in all the way to heaven. I wondered what they meant, that say religion is a melancholy thing; I can see nothing but joy. I was with David singing, my mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved. In this pleasant condition, I continued for a while, never dreaming what temptations Satan was contriving to lay in my way, to make me stumble; I was boasting so strongly, and singing so cheerfully without fear:

MOST holy Lord I thee intreat,
Teach me thee how to praise;

I of myself unworthy am

To speak of all thy ways.

But here I beg of thee. O Lord,

Not for mine own name's sake;

But in the name of Jesus Christ

My pray'r to thee I'll make.

For thou hast said, that in his name

To thee we may make bold;

According to thy promises,

Which thou of old us told.

Therefore the greatest sinners that

In this world being have,

May

May comfort draw from this great name,
If they do right believe.

For he hath, for his people's sake,
Come down from heaven high,
To pacify his Father's wrath;
O such humility!
That the great Lord of heaven and earth
Should humble him so low,
For us, that were his enemies,
Should so great kindness show!

That he should of a woman poor
Be born, and that so low!
For in the house there was no room
For this great Lord to go;
But he must to some outer place,
Where horse was wont to ly.
O all ye that his people be,
Admire humility!

But yet, behold what love from God,
Who did his angels send
With that great news, that Christ was born,
His people to defend.
But not to great men, and to kings,
That this great news was told;
It was to shepherds poor, I say,
And not to hierod bold.

Who when he heard that Christ was born,
To be his people's king,
He sent forth men in rage, who slew
The babes in Bethlehem.
All ye who be his people dear,
Admire this humble king,
Who for your sakes a servant was,
That we thro' him might reign.

He thought no shame to choose such men
As sithers poor we hear,
Both poor and mean; come let us then
Our humble king admire.
The Jews with scoffing, mocking words,
They did our king defame,

The

May

The prince of devils they did him call
Which word was to blaspheme,

When he into the garden was,
Much agony he found ;
Which made him sweat great drops of blood,
Falling down to the ground.
O likewise see him set at nought
By Pilate and his men,
Who put on's head a crown of thorns,
And cry'd, Behold the Man.

They mocked more, when in the place,
The blood was running down ;
Yea, they rejoic'd to see him pain'd,
And so they rail'd on ;
And cry'd, and said, Cause crucify
And scourge this blessed One,
And cause him bear his heavy cross,
His bloody back upon.

Behold what he upon the cross
Did from their hands receive,
A painful, shameful, cursed death,
That he might us relieve !
In spirit he was troubled sore,
When he aloud did cry,
' My God, my God,' twice he express'd,
' Hast thou forsaken me !'

We have heard of his humble life,
And death and verity.
The more we hear, the more admire
Our Lord's humility ;
Who suffer'd himself to be brought down,
And laid into the ground ;
Yea, laid in grave, who at this time
Gave death a deadly wound.

O thou my Lord, now see that I
In his name to thee come,
Who hath redeem'd me by his blood,
Jesus Christ is his name.
All praise and thanks unto the Lord
I shall for ever sing,
And give thee thanks for all thy works
And wonders thou hast done.

O Lord my God, how then shall I
Begin to speak of thee?
I'm like blind folk, that speak of things
That they did never see;
Come, help me then, O Lord my God,
If so I may thee call;
Give me thy blessing, give me grace,
And knowledge then withall.

So will I show what thou, O Lord,
Hast done for wretched me,
Who at thy hand deserv'd nothing
But death and misery.
When I was in a woful state
Thou pity hadst on me,
And gave me help when trouble came;
All praise and thanks to thee!

I who did live in that sad case
Of wicked unbelief,
Which made me almost to despair,
And to cry, no relief!
O let me come and wonder then
That mercy was so free!
The goodness of the Lord so great
To filthy wretched me!

Lord, ever blessed be thy name,
Glory be given to thee,
Praise let me sing to thy great name,
JEHOVAH, thanks to thee.
And let my tongue be ever still
In talking of thy love;
For it becomes me, while I live,
Thee to admire above.

O Lord, 'tis all I crave of thee,
While in this world I live,
To give me grace and wisdom to
Acknowledge what I have.
Because that thou hast suffer'd me
These little songs to make,
While I live, I will call on thee,
And for my Lord thee take.

December

December 25. 1694.

AS all the Lord's ways with me have been as so many wonders; so I think it my duty to record one dispensation of providence which I met with this night; and in so doing, O that I were as a beacon set up, that others may be aware of these rocks on which I had almost split, if God had not prevented it. This night I was sitting, myself alone, thinking on a sermon which I had heard, and of three remarkable observations, from Matth. viii. 31, 32.

The *first* was, The devil will take little before he wants all; he lost the man, he is content with the swine. The *second*, They run fast that the devil drives. The *third*, The devil brings all his hogs to an ill market, they ran violently, and perished in the waters: in the meantime, when I was thinking on these observations, I forgot one of them; I desired that God would bring it to my memory again, which was not granted to me presently. Immediately I was tempted to atheism, and that strongly: the temptation was this, there is no God: it is a vain thing to believe in Christ. And this was prest on me by arguments of such a nature, that it is not convenient to record. This temptation struck in me a strange consternation what to do. If there be no God, from whence proceedeth my being? In this desperate case I went to prayer, crying, What will I do? What will I do, O Maker of heaven and earth? I am in a great strait about thy being: once I thought that thou wast the God of my salvation; but now it seems that all has been in vain. But while I was on my knees, musing like one out of their senses, drowned in the deeps of unbelief;

Then did the Lord step to my help, and had pity on me when he saw me sinking. Yea, he took not advantage of my weakness to destroy me; but he let his power appear in holding me up. He brought the observation to my memory which I forgot; and then he convinced me of my sins, which filled me with wonder and admiration. What! might not the Lord throw me into hell for entertaining such hellish thoughts? Then I betook myself to God by prayer, that for Christ's sake he would pardon my sin of entertaining such a sinful temptation. O but the Lord was condescending to me; for he surprised me with his presence; where I got a new confirmation of my interest in Christ, and was made plead the promise that he was my God, and my King, and my Redeemer. I dare say it, as in his sight I never experienced a sweeter time than this

this was. It well becomes me to record it, both for my own comfort and the good of others. O that I could praise the Lord in my conversation, and that from this time I might be set apart for to serve the Lord for ever and ever! This was the strongest assault that ever I met with; but glory, glory to God the Father, (the offended), to God the Son, (who was in the offender's stead), to God the Holy Ghost who strengthened me with strength, so that Satan got not his will of me this night, though it was the beginning of sorrow to me indeed, for this battle of atheism began this night; yet I seemed to get some victory over it; but I found the remainders to lie still in my bosom, ready upon every temptation to break forth. After this I fell into an extraordinary deadness of spirit, I was sensibly deserted; I wist not what to do; I could tell my case to none, it was so extraordinary; I had some Christian comrades with whom I frequently conversed; to my great satisfaction; but I could find none of them in my case, which made me bemoan the more.

January 1. 1695. I was with them in the morning, where they were conversing about the love of Christ: this wrought a strong desire in me again to know more of this Jesus. Alas! I was perfectly ignorant; I came home, but O I would fain been at Christ's school to learn the first lesson of religion; for I thought I was nothing but an hypocrite, and that all the promises I had got were but upon condition that I should walk up according to my receipts of mercies; and, as far as I came short, the promises were not to be made out to me: then that word came in my mind, where Moses was reproving the chiding of the children of Israel, he tells them from the Lord, "That because they had not walked in the ways of the Lord, therefore they should know his breach of promise." Then I thought this message was expressly to me, which increased my trouble; thinking now, God is at enmity with me, none of the promises belong to me. In this case I remained till the 12th day, being Saturday; at night I went to prayer, but very sadly lamenting my condition, and crying, O for another offer of a reconciled God in Christ, I would give all the world! Upon the morrow, being the sabbath, our minister, Mr George Meldrum, choosed that text, Col. i. 21. "And you, who were sometimes enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." Where indeed I had a Christ freely offered to me; and he told us, that God had sent him with this message, we then as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you

by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. I must confess, this minister was many times God's messenger to me, but especially this day; it was my duty to love and pray for him, that his Master's message may prosper in all places where he shall be sent. He delighted in nothing but in preaching Christ, and him crucified. If my heart deceive me not, I thought I got favour with God this night, and that very comfortably; but, alas! it was but a blink before a shower. Then the tempter came on me again, to make me misbelieve, and that I was mistaken about favour with God, for all that I had met with was but mere delusions; for I was still ignorant; and that which grieved me was my sin that I lived under such a clear gospel-ministry. O! my ignorance of God and Christ stared me in the face in such a manner, that it made me cry I am undone! I have been born to be a monument of his displeasure; O what will I do! God has forsaken me, O that I had never been born! for I get no leave to come to God in prayer as I wont. Then I began to debate myself out of Christ by many arguments which are not convenient to name, but especially that I was but an outside Christian, for I had nothing but a bare profession; indeed I had shew enough, and name enough, and tongue enough; but the inwards of religion I wanted: I was like a body without a soul. I saw myself lost and undone, but, which was worst of all, it did not affect me as it would have done another; some would not sleep a sound sleep, but as for me it never had that effect on me. Notwithstanding of all this, I saw much of God's love and concern to me, in this especially, that whatever troubled me through the week, Mr Meldrum came out to me with it on the Sabbath, which struck me with admiration; for, if I had told my case to him or any other, I would thought he had got notice of me some way, but I revealed my mind to none: so that I saw it was the Spirit of God speaking to me by him. O how sweet and refreshful I found the Sabbath-days!

Then Satan would begin to make me misbelieve; yea, he employed all his power to lead me in the way to destruction; yea, he brought such atheistical thoughts to me, that I had almost turned desperate; for I thought that there was not another like me in the world for sinning. But, to the glory of God, now I may tell it, now and then he was giving me some cordial to hold me up, otherwise I had given over altogether; especially that in Cor. i. 30.

“Christ was made for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctifica-

tion

tion and redemption:" this word redemption was made sweet to me oftener than once or twice; and then I thought I would never misbelieve again. But alas! my heart soon deceived me, it was so sickle; for, after my greatest receipts of mercy, I was assaulted with the greatest temptations; they were ay the stronger, and this made my trial the heavier: so that I thought, never one of God's people was assaulted as I was with such temptations; yea, I thought not so much of being assaulted, but the temptation always overcame me. At this time I was very much overcome with sleep at secret prayer, which I thought never one was but myself: these things wrought so on me, that I was brought to a lamentable condition. I thought there was no hope for me, and that it was in vain for me to read or pray; for God would not have mercy on such an hypocrite as I was. To this temptation I yielded, and ran to desperate conclusions, the which I am ashamed to record. There was not a temptation out of hell but I was tempted to it. When the tempter saw that all his temptations were yielded to, then he brought that of atheism again to me, in such a manner as neither tongue nor pen can declare it; neither could I reveal it to any, for none in the world was ever tempted to this; I am singular. When I had been going to prayer, then I was strongly assaulted: there is no God, there is no Christ, no Holy Ghost; it is but a fancy the Bible, it is not God's word, it is but a contrivance of men; ministers are not the servants of God, but seducers of the people, all your religious duties are but lost labour; the heathen are rightier than you; for they worship the God they know, but you worship a God you know not. The devil made use of many arguments which are not convenient to record.

In this case I was brought to as sad a distemper as any can conceive, and yet I durst tell it to none; and all that I could do, was to cry, O happy are they that believe there is a God! When I had been going through the streets, every body I met I would be saying within myself, O if I were but that body! For they are not troubled with unbelief as I am. When I heard any cursing or swearing in the name of God, O thought I, if I were but one of these folks! for they believe that there is a God: yet I thought, if I believed there is a God, I durst not speak of him as they do. I thought every body believed it but me; I wist not what to do. I would have given any thing to know if ever any was troubled with such thoughts. I was once reading a book, called Francis

Spira, which did hurt me more than all the books ever I saw; O that I had never seen it! for I thought I would make the same end he made; but, which was worst to me, there were some atheists that wrote letters to him to confirm him in his atheism, which words could not get out of my mind; which made me lament that ever I read Francis Spira. I had several other books I read concerning the being of a God; but could get light from none of them, till one day I was reading on a book called, "Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners;" where the author of that book, John Bunyan, gave an account of the Lord's way with him, who after he had received great tokens of God's love, while he was under this disease of atheism, this refreshed me a little; but still I remained in a doubt, and would not believe, unless a wonder was wrought to my outward senses. I do not believe ever one was so guilty in this as I was; for my sin had many aggravations. O what a wonder was it that God did not throw me into the pit, where I would have gotten sensible knowledge, to my sad experience, that there was a God, by being everlastingly tormented in the flames of his wrath! But, O how shall I record the wonderful goodness of God to me in this tossed case, that would not suffer me to be tempted more than I was able to bear, but with the temptation sent a delivery, April 12. 1695.

I as a poor tempted, tossed creature, with every wind of temptation, not able to do any thing for my own help, and having none to do it for me; thus I was accounting myself lost and undone. In this deplorable case in steps Christ (who is always a friend in need) with a motion of his Spirit, who persuaded me there was hope for me yet; and that, if I should come, I would get as free access to the throne of grace as ever. The very thoughts of this so transported me, that I found a sensible change in a moment. As soon as possible I went along; and, as I was opening the door, that word came to me with power, "thought thou I was altogether such an one?" &c. Psal. i. Yea, the Lord did, as it were, expostulate the matter with me in kindness, convincing me of my sin; but all in love. "Do you think yourself in the wrong, in doubting of that where-
 " of you have been so often solemnly confirmed in the
 " former times; and yet to give way to the tempta-
 " tion, because you got no signs and wonders wrought,
 " which would have been enough to distract you? Was
 " not your duty to have been submissive to my will, to
 " have revealed myself to you in what way I please? So
 " an

" in this thing you have sinned extremely ; but that the
 " promise may be made good in you, which I gave, I will
 " never leave you, nor forsake you, even tho' you have for-
 " saken me so frequently." At this I verily wondered, that
 the great and glorious God should ever suggest such thoughts
 of peace to such a filthy wretch as I ! It struck me with
 wonder and admiration, that his wrath and anger did not
 break forth on me, and that he did not threaten to send
 me down to hell for my sin ; but that scripture is fulfilled
 to me, Isa. lv. 8. My thoughts are not your thoughts,
 neither my ways your ways, saith the Lord. O but this
 was a sweet time to me ! wherein I got leave to pour out
 my mind before the Lord in secret ; where I got a new
 discovery of a Trinity of persons, and yet an unity of es-
 sence ; the which all the ministers in the world, all the
 books in the world could not do, I was so obstinate in un-
 belief ; and yet, by his Spirit, he wrought faith in me, in
 such a manner, as I could have sealed it with my blood.
 O then, I was filled with wonder and praise, and self-
 boasting, when I thought on the love of God in Christ Je-
 sus ! I doubt not but it will be thought strange by many,
 that ever such atheistical thoughts got entertainment with
 me ; for it is a thing known to all, That there is a
 God. Indeed I must acknowledge, it is a great truth, and
 ought to be believed by all. But alas ! to my shame and
 sad experience, I find it be one thing to believe it in
 faith, That there is a God ; and another thing to say,
 There is a God. I am sure this faith we bring not into the
 world with us ; it is a work of God's Spirit.

On the morrow after, my very countenance was chang-
 ed ; with respect to the things of the world every thing
 was pleasant to me, there was such a flood of joy that filled
 my heart, when I thought on what a great mercy I had
 received : yea, it is impossible for me to express what
 great delight I had in my spirit. I resolved to set the next
 day apart (being the sabbath) for fasting and humiliation :
 but, what shall I say ? mercy and love followed me at the
 heels ; for he turned the day of my intended sorrow to a
 day of joy and rejoicing, and put a new song in my mouth
 of praise to the Lord : and, as the Lord shall help me, I
 shall record what of the Lord's kindness I met with on
 that day. O that I could do it, as to make every one
 that heareth of it fall in love with lovely and sweet Jesus !

Edinburgh, April 14. 1695. Being the sabbath day.

I MAY remember this day with wonder and admiration, at the love of God in Christ Jesus. In the morning, when I was at secret prayer, I got near access to the throne of grace, where I got my heart poured out before the Lord, with a great deal of sweetness and composure of spirit attending it: then that word was brought to my mind, Deut. xvi. 1. 'Observe the month of Abib; for in the month Abib the Lord brought you out of the land of Egypt.' This word was very suitable to my present circumstance, and I was helped to make application.

After this I came to the place of public worship, where that servant of Christ, Mr George Meldrum, preached on Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.' He observed these four things from the words.

First, That, by nature, we were all holding Christ at the door, and would not let him in. 2dly, That it was Christ's work to stand and knock, tho' we were obstinate in keeping the door fast. 3dly, That many unkind answers we give him, and yet he takes not the first nay-say. 4thly, That he is yet willing to make a new offer to all that will accept of him on his own terms; and that all by-gones shall be by-gones, and they shall have sweet fellowship and communion with himself. My memory cannot serve me to set down every word he spoke distinctly; but this I am sure, I thought he told me every thing that ever I did or thought; how I had kept Christ at the door with my unholy carriage and deportment. I thought nothing but that I should burst within myself the time I was hearing, it touched my case so near. This was a day of power to me indeed, as ever I felt; for I saw that it was the Spirit of the Lord speaking by his servant, who also brought alongst with it a power to make me willing.

In the end of his sermon, he came with one of the largest offers of Christ that ever I heard, to all that would accept of it. He told us, Christ was willing, and the fault would lie at our own door if we would not give our consent; and he, as a faithful messenger, took witness against us, if we would not accept of the offer; and that he would witness against us at the great day, that he brought such good news to us; so it would prove to our loss, if we did not consent; in which place I took heaven and earth to witness, angels and men, the very place where I was, that I was
made

made willing and content to take Christ on his own terms as he was offered in his natures and offices, as a Prophet to teach me, as a Priest to reconcile me to God, as a King to rule and govern me. After sermon was done, I went home to secret prayer, where I met the Lord; and there we covenanted one with another, where again I renewed my consent to the bargain; so that I was content to take up the cross and follow him, in any manner he pleased to dispose of me; cross, loss, and persecution, nothing should separate me from Christ again: At this time I had such a sense of the love of Christ and his beauty, and of my own vileness and loathsomeness, that I can express no way what a rapture I was in; this day was a wonderful day indeed, for Christ appeared to me all in love, as if I had never done him an ill turn. O how sweetly was that word borne in upon me! Ezek. xvi. 6. 8. 'And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, then my time was a time of love, and I said unto thee, Live. And I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.' O, then, how was I filled with wonder and astonishment! And again, I took myself to witness, and all things about me or beside me, that I would open the door of my heart to precious Christ, and make him heartily welcome. There is one thing I cannot pass without observation; I was at this time in a very carnal family, who knew nothing of my present case; for I laboured to keep every thing as secret as possible, for fear of being made an object of mockery. In the mean time, while I was thus employed, there came one to the door where I was, to call me to dinner; but I refused to come: in a little after, they came again, and called me to come and read, as their custom was after dinner: and, lest they should suspect me, I came and read the xviiith Psalm, where it begins with so many my's, that it was almost impossible for me to hide what was upon my spirit; there are nine my's, every one of them sweeter than another, 'My strength, my rock, my deliverer, my fortress, my God, my strength, my buckler, my salvation, my high tower.' O how sweet were these my's to me! But what shall I say? Every part and duty of the day was sweeter than another; so that I ended that day with songs of praise and thanksgiving, and wondering at the love of God in Christ Jesus to the like of me. In this case I remained for some days. I was like a new come out traveller, in vigour and strength; I leapt over walls and mountains of difficulties; nothing could hinder me in the way; for I thought I had not another tempta-
tion

tion to meet with, as that of atheism, which did overcome me. O the pleasant life I enjoyed for a while! But, alas! these days were but few in number; I was, with David, singing, 'My mountain stands strong; but he hid his face, and I was troubled.' The tempter and enemy of our salvation seeing that I was so forward on my journey, did not at the first labour to turn me out of the way, but bit and bit, in a most politic way, he turned me out of the way, by throwing now and then stones of difficulties at me: so that I grew tired and weary, and so sat down to rest me by slackening my hand in duties; but it was a dear down-sitting to me, for I fell asleep, and then I contracted such a deadness on my spirit, that I could do nothing at all. At this time I was mightily overcome with sleeping, at secret prayer, the which I never thought any that belonged to the Lord was subject to but myself: I cannot tell what this corruption of sleep made me think of myself; but truly I thought I was nothing but an hypocrite. There were many things that proved my hypocrisy: the whole corruptions of nature got up on me to such a degree, that I thought I was one of the vilest of creatures that ever was born, and because of this God would assuredly cast me off. O then the temptation came strongly upon me to misbelieve; so that I was not able to stand before it. I having lost my strength, which was a sense of God's love and favour to me, so, consequently, I lost my joy and comfort, and soon forgot the mighty works of the Lord which were so lately displayed to me.

There is one thing that I cannot but record particularly, and it is this: there were many corruptions in my nature that rendered me vile and ugly; but yet, I can say they got not quiet quarters with me, but still I would be opposing them, and rising means to put them out of my heart: but at length there came one (to my grief and sorrow I may speak it) more agreeable to my nature than any of the rest, which I may call my predominant sin, it being the head and shoulders taller than all the rest; and, when the tempter brought this inclination-sin to me, it was busked up so religious-like, in all the circumstances of it, that in a short time it draws away my heart from Christ: and, as I took means to put away the rest of my corruptions, so I took pains to encourage this sin, and to keep it in my heart; with complacency and delight I took it in my arms, as it were, and embraced it cheerfully; and as for all the vows and promises I had made to give up my heart to Christ; yet I soon brake them all, and gave the

idol of jealousy my heart, and Christ got but the outer court.

But, what shall I say? This was but the beginning of sorrow to me; for I readily embraced that snake in my bosom, which bit me severely, as (if the Lord will) I shall declare. About this time there was word of a communion to be given at Lasiwade, which was joyful news to me; but no sooner I began to think upon it but the tempter came upon me, to dissuade me from the same, by holding forth to me what an one I was. What! will such a wretch as you be accepted at the Lord's table, who hath dealt so unfaithfully at former times, and broke so many covenants? it is but presumption for you to go; it is better for you to bide away. But yet I was helped to go in the strength of the Lord, with all my filthiness; to the fountain to be washed. But yet it was borne in upon me that the Lord was angry at me, and so it would be presumption; then were all my sins presented before me; such as unbelief and atheism, my want of love to Christ, my pride both natural and spiritual, my hypocrisy, my backsliding, my predominant sin. Then said the tempter, What can such an one as you expect there, who is so guilty and filthy? Then I replied, it is such an one as I that should go, for there is not a cure to be had for any of these sins but in Christ. But O, said the tempter, you are not prepared to go, for you want the wedding-garment. Then, said I, what I want Christ has; I can only have from him, and none of my own. I will go to him in my rags, in expectation to get robes. O the ups and downs I was in for a while! Sometimes I thought I would not go; other times I resolved to do as Esther did, to cast myself at the foot of mercy, and if I perished, it would be but my deserving. I thought my sin would never leave me till Christ would say, Come out of her, ye devil. Over the belly of many oppositions, both spiritual and temporal, I came to the place on Saturday, where Mr William Wiffheart, in the preface, said, I fear there are many to-day here, who are to begin their preparation-work. Then I thought that word touched me very near. His text was, Isa. xxxiii. 17. 'Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.' He told us, the King of glory would be there to-morrow; but he feared that many would be like the man that came a great many miles to see a race run, and when he came, he lay down the time it was running and fell asleep.

Then

Then Mr James Kirkton preached on Ezek. xx. 21. 'And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord, I will not be inquired of by you.' He spoke to several sorts of people, by whom the Lord would not be inquired of, but particularly he spoke to a sort of people who were of an unbelieving spirit, and gave way to atheism, and questioned the truth of the holy word of God, and were ashamed to tell it to any who would solve them of their doubts: surely the Lord would not be inquired of by them. The truth is, I thought he was God's fend, to reprove me for my former and present iniquity, which bred no small trouble; but, in the close of his sermon, he had a very sweet and comfortable word, and it was this: is there any here casten down under the sense of their sins? Come away, spend this night well; and tho' you were a Manasseh, a Mary Magdalene, a Saul, you shall be welcome to our Lord's table to-morrow. This was no small encouragement to me, though it was hard work to spend a night well.

On the morrow, which was the second day of June, 1695, I thought I got a very sweet morning, and was big with expectation that I would see the King in his beauty at his table: but I had no sooner entered the kirk door but I lost my hopes, and my heart fell a wandering; so that I can neither tell with tongue nor pen what case I was brought to: I thought I was singular for sinning. I was so ill that I was not in a capacity to hear the word, so as to receive profit. At length, when Mr Flint was fencing the tables, there was not one sin that he debarred from the table of the Lord, but, in some measure, I could charge myself with it; for these that I had not actually committed as to the eye of the world, yet I found the seeds of them lying at my heart, ready to be brought forth at the first occasion: then I wist not what to do. I thought that, if the ministers had known me, they would come, and, in particular, discharge me from the table: yet, notwithstanding of this, I had a strange inclination to be at the Lord's table; and, accordingly, I went to the Lord's table, which was served by Mr James Kirkton, being the fourth table. But, when I was set down, I could say nothing; these petitions I thought I would present to the King, I forgot them, deadness seized on me; I wanted the actings of faith on the Son of God, and being in a most uncomfortable condition, my heart cried out, 'Lord, I am thine, I am thine.' If I could do no more, I thought I would give myself away anew to the Lord. I came from the table very

very uncomforted, without seeing the King in his beauty. Then but I was greatly perplexed what to do! I was full of discontentment with myself for my sinning; but I wan to justify the Lord in all that he did to me; and was thankful that I was not made a monument of his wrath at his table. I must confes, it was a day of power to many poor souls; and that increased my grief; every body is getting good but me. I cannot tell the distress I was in, during all the rest of the public worship; but, when all was over, I thought with myself, may be I have not given myself fully enough to Christ; therefore, before I enter in any company, I will go in among the trees, and there renew my covenant with the Lord, and give myself wholly to him. When I came to the place I intended, I sat down, and took my Bible that was in my hand to witness, all the trees about Lashwade to witness, but especially the tree I sat at to witness, that I was entirely given to the Lord, without reserve; where I poured out my heart before him. When I came from the place, I wist not what to think, whether the Lord had been there or not; I still remained in doubt about it; and at night, when I was at prayer, I was just at my old disease of sleeping again. Then thought I, ah! I am all wrong, the Lord has not heard me this day, so as to accept of my requests; yet I encouraged myself, that I would, may be, meet the Lord the last day of the feast; but was disappointed; for I came away from the feast uncomforted. Yet there remained some hope in me; for I thought, though the Lord has withdrawn himself with respect to my sensible uptaking, yet I will know if he was really with me, in two or three days, if my corruptions come not back on me again; but alas! they came back, and that in a dreadful manner, more strong and vigorous than ever; which made me conclude, that I met not with Christ at Lashwade.

Then began I to inquire after the cause of it, and I saw that it was my ignorance of God which was the sin for which he was contending. There were two scriptures borne in upon me at this time, Acts xvii. 23. 'As I passed by and beheld their devotion, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, &c. 2 Cor. xv. 34. There are some that have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame.' I began to pose myself, what of this knowledge I had? but I saw that I was wholly ignorant of God. Oh, oh! it is one thing to say and believe there is a God, and another thing to believe him to be such a God

God as his word holds him out to be. Great was the darkness I was under; for neither sun light nor star-light appeared to me for many days, so as to shew me my duty; neither threatenings nor promises could affect me. In this lamentable condition I wandered up and down, till at last I ran myself upon a desperate rock; I concluded, that Christ had no more love for me than the rest of the world, all my former experiences were in no stead to me, for I was past all recovery: while I was in this desperate case, I think it not convenient to record what I met with; but all that I shall say on despair, is this, it is likest to a begun hell on the conscience of any thing in the world: curling and blaspheming are the concomitants that attend it.

Notwithstanding of all this, yet the love of God wonderfully appeared to me; that there was scarce a sabbath past over, but, either in public or secret, I got some strengthening cordial to hold me up; otherwise I would have given over altogether. What shall I say? Even in these sabbaths, when I got, as it were, some hope that these temptations would be destroyed; even then my idol of jealousy, my inclination sin, had such power over me, that many times these would send me home roaring, and crying to the Lord to exercise his kingly power over me; for now I saw the need of Christ, a King indeed.

It pleased the Lord to bestow upon me occasion of renewing my covenant with himself, at the sacrament in the Tron-kirk, October 27, 1695. where I renewed all my engagements, and gave myself anew to the Lord. How it fared with me there, I cannot distinctly tell; only at this time there was wrought in me a vehement desire to die; nothing could please me then, but death: not for any outward trouble or affliction in the world, or the want of earthly pleasures, that made me so desirous to be away, but it was sin dwelling in me, and ruling over me, that made my life a burden to me, so that I would have been content of any thing that would part me and it. I saw sin cleaving to my best duties, as in reading the word; O what wandering here! in my hearing, many wanderings, in my converse with others, meikle hypocrisy and self-conceit. In a word, my praying and communicating, I see sin, as it were, woven with them: I can do nothing but sin. This was no small trouble to me.

About this same time, there was an outward dispensation of providence, that proved very weighty to me, and it was this; I was to leave the Tron-kirk parish, and go to the College-kirk parish; and the thoughts of leaving Mr

Meldrum

Meldrum, who had been so useful to me, was like a second death: for a space I went always to the Tron-kirk, and would not go to the College-kirk, tho' that worthy servant of Christ, Mr John Moncrief, was their minister. Every body was angry with me, why I did not keep my parish-kirk; but nothing would prevail with me to leave Mr Meldrum, till at last there was a word borne in upon me, 'Is the Spirit of God tied to one place, or one person?' This was backed with such power, that I thought it was a reproof from the Lord for my esteeming one minister above another. After this I went to the College-kirk, and the first sermon I heard there by Mr John Moncrief, was, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure.' That which he insisted upon was, the security of the covenant, where he had this comfortable word. "To all that are in covenant with the Lord, this covenant is well secured, it cannot be broken. God will not break it on his part; for he hath said it, written it, proclaimed it, and sworn it, and what would you have more for security? O but, says the poor thing, alas! I have broken it on my part with my sinning. No, says he, sin on your part shall not break the covenant." This was comfortable doctrine to me indeed, this being one of my great fears, and after this day I durst never leave my parish-kirk.

There is one thing I cannot but remark: Mr Meldrum was on the same subject when I left him; so that it was but a change of place to me, and not a change of subject. I dare not say but he was God's messenger to me, who confirmed that, which I was formerly calling in question. Then did the way of the Lord become sweet and pleasant to me; it was my delight to be serving the Lord. O how glad was I to find an occasion to be telling to others of my comrades, how gloriously the Lord was dealing with me! Which sometimes was refreshful to them as well as myself. Notwithstanding all my merciful receipts of his loving-kindness, yet I wanted not some bitter ingredients mixed in with it: especially this, my parents state and condition was not so as I could have wished for, the worship of God was not in the family: and this became a grievous weight to me. As for my father, he was nothing but a moral man, no ways taken up with the duties of religion, neither one way nor other. My mother was more seriously employed, both in public and secret performances: she would be frequently exhorting me to seek the Lord and

to pray. I remember one day I heard her tell, that when she was with child of me, she was helped in a wonderful manner to pray for saving grace to me, when it should please the Lord to bring me to the world; which was very satisfying to me when I heard it; yet I wanted not my own fears concerning her. It pleased the Lord at this time to cross my parents with respect to things of the world; providence wrought so against them, that it grieved me to see my parents in such trouble; yea, many times it would have sent me to my knees for them, and also that the Lord would take my heart from me, and keep it for ever, I may say, that their afflictions were among the first things that set me on to seek the Lord in earnest.

Now, when I saw that none of these afflictions were like to work any reformation in the family, this became matter of exercise to me indeed. It was strongly borne in upon me, that I should reveal my mind concerning my parents to themselves, which after long debates to myself, how to do it, I broke off on sabbath-night, when we were at supper. I told my parent of his sin, in not setting up the worship of God in his family; and desired him to do it; but this was to no purpose; for I did not prevail with him. Then wist I not what to think, or what to do; yet I was mightily enabled in secret prayer to plead for his conversion, tho' I had but little hopes. At this time the gospel was very sweet to me: Mr Moncrief was on Zaccheus's conversion, Luke xix. where he held forth the nature of conversion, the means the Lord made use of in order to it. I thought I never heard more refreshing sermons than these were, and more backed with power on my heart; but especially when he was on these words, "And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully." On which day I again experienced a day of power on my heart, making me willing to receive Christ: and what joy I was filled with, I can express to none.

After this, my body of sin and death got up on me again, which oppressed me mightily, and many times overcame me; so that I did conclude, my spots were not the spots of God's children: and, for all the length I had come in religion, I knew not but an hypocrite might come the same: for I make no progress in religion more than that I go the round of duties, and abstain from gross out-breakings. In a word, I thought I had no more but a form of godliness and knew nothing of the power of it, so as to mortify my heart plagues. The wind of temptation blew so hard on me, that it blew away my hope; I lost sight of an inter-

rest in Christ; I razed the foundation, and was persuaded that I was nothing but a painted sepulchre, a whitened wall; I appeared, something without, but within I was a nest of devils. Then was this scripture represented to me, concerning the two men that builded a house; the one built on a rock, the other on the sand; the house that was built on a rock, it endured the winds and storms; that they beat on it, yet they blew it not over: whereas the house on the sand, when the tempest arose, it could not stand it out, but was blown over to a ruinous heap. I made close application, that I would make the same end, for I had such loads of corruption bearing me down, that I could not believe a child of God could be so plagued; which made me many times put up that petition to the Lord, either take me out of this world, or keep me from the evil of it. O then, how earnestly did I long to have Christ as a king made over to me, to subdue these unmortified corruptions of mine, the which I was neither able nor willing to do of myself! I sensibly found two parties within me; the one was for entertaining my idols with pleasure and delight. O but this party was strong! The other party was for casting my idols to the door: but it was like a child new come to the world, it had no strength at all, O but I found it hard work to be a Christian!

In this case I toiled on, till the sacrament was given in the College-kirk, where I enjoyed as sweet a communion as ever I did in my life. On the fast day, I cannot but acknowledge I was in some measure helped to a mournful frame of spirit, both for my own sins and others; all which lay very weighty on me. This day I was also helped to the duty of supplication on all these accounts, so that none of them might hinder our communion blessings. I ended this day with a sense of the omission of many duties, and the commission of many sins: but I cast myself and my duties over on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, expecting only to be accepted in him, and for his sake.

On Saturday, the preparation-day, I cannot but say, the Lord was sensibly present among us. Mr William Moncrief preached on John xi. 'Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?' In which sermon there was much of the glory of God to be seen, working on the hearts of the people, and on mine also.

On Sabbath morning Mr John Moncrief was on Ezek. xvi. 8. 'And when I passed by, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, then thy time was a time of love, and I said unto thee, Live. And entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.' Where he held forth a marriage between Christ and poor sinners; he was much on the inequality of the marriage; whereon I remember he said, when a man goes to seek a wife, there is one of these four things that persuades him, either riches, or beauty, or parentage, or a good nature and virtues; but none of all those were in our Lord's bride, to persuade him, as this chapter gives an account. He was very pressing that we should consent to the bargain. In which place, I took heaven and earth to witness, I took all the servants of the Lord to witness, and all that were present with me to witness, that I was well content of Christ on any terms, a whole Christ, Prophet, Priest, and King, consenting to undergo cross, loss, and persecution, if I be called to it. O I thought a stake to be burnt at, for the name of Jesus, nothing; a gibbet, a prison nothing, if Christ be in it. I this day take thee to be my husband and Lord, and I to be thy married spouse, and will not be for another. I was persuaded, this was the Spirit of the Lord engaging, and not I.

After that I had consented to this blessed bargain deliberately, I went to get it sealed at the sacrament, it being the first day of December 1696. I approached to the sixth table, where Mr George Andrew served; it was a sweet while to me, where I enjoyed communion and fellowship with the Lord: there were two scriptures darted on me with life and power, Jer. xxxi. 3. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love.' Hos. ii. 19. 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever.' O that I may never forget the communion in the College-kirk! My petitions at the Lord's-table were these: that the Lord would continue his gospel in Scotland for ever; and that he would abide with his servants the ministers, and make the gospel thrive under their hands; pardon their sins and ours; plead not a broken covenant, solemn and national engagements against us, which we are all guilty of. I here this day desire all may be in covenant with thee again: as also my poor father, take him into the bond of the covenant; and my mother, let every thing be removed that hinders her closing with thee in the gospel: my brother, keep him in thy way, that he run not away with the vain world. O my fear is great, on their behalf; for which I must be importunate,

fortunate, and not take a nay-say; if it may consist with thy holy will deny me not.

There were also some petitions I put up for myself. First, That the Lord would give me a sincere heart to every duty: I found so much hypocrisy cleaving to me in every duty I performed, which made me long for sincerity and reality in whatever I did. 2dly, That the Lord would make me unchangeable in all my vows and resolutions this day: I have a nature apt to change; but O let me be steadfast in the way of the Lord. 3dly, That I might be a real member of Christ's body, so as to grieve when thy people grieve, and to rejoice when thy people rejoice: for thy people shall be my people, as far as I can know them. 4thly, That I may be an useful, fruitful tree in thy vineyard, bringing forth much fruit to thy glory. 5thly, That I may get a spirit of humiliation, lest I be exalted above measure; and that because thou art dealing with me graciously, beyond many in the world; the thoughts of which struck me with wonder and admiration! There were two things especially I was made to wonder at, First, That I was brought forth in a land where Christ was offered to lost sinners. 2dly, That my heart was made to consent to the offer when it came. O the love and joy I was filled with! These carnal pastimes I was wont to take pleasure in; now I saw none; and though as to my natural disposition, I was as merry as any; yet, now, I can tell it to my experience, that I never knew what it was to be joyful till I received Christ. How greatly are they to blame, that say; religion is a melancholy thing? I am persuaded of the contrary; for a carnal man or woman never knew what joy was. I may call this place Eben-ezer, or Bethel, where I met with God, and brought my idols and corruptions to get them mortified; and in expectation to get all my petitions granted, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ the Mediator of the new covenant: I subscribe myself to be the Lord's.

Elisabeth West.

THERE was a very sad and lamentable providence happened after this great and solemn ordinance in the city; on the Saturday following, there was a terrible fire in the Canongate-head, which consumed a great deal; in a short time the whole city was all in confusion, as it was no wonder. In the mean time, when I first heard it, I was at prayer, but was very dead and dull; but the news and sight of this fire put a new edge on my spirit; where I

got leave to pour out my heart before the Lord; and the main petition I ran on was, that the Lord would make this fire a mean of conversion to some one or other; which I thought would turn our mourning into a song.

On the next day, being Sabbath, Mr Moncrief was on these words, Micah vi. 9. 'The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear thy rod, and who hath appointed it.' He observed, that very rod had a voice, and it was only the wise man that would understand the language of it. He told us, that God's voice was crying to this city, and that he was come to the very ports, and was crying over the walls to us, that we should amend our ways, lest he should come into our city and consume us in a terrible manner. I cannot tell what this dispensation of providence wrought on me; but I am sure of this, it lets me see the vanity of all time's created pleasures, and that they are the only happy folk that have their treasures in heaven. O but the Spirit of the Lord was at great pains to shew me what the Lord was! I saw, as in a glass, both what was good and evil in it. There are these seventeen remarks I had upon the world, twelve of them are evil and hurtful, five of them good and useful.

First, I saw that these that are bent in seeking the world, they must sustain a great deal of troubles and vexations ere they can get it: O this is a great evil; have we nothing to vex or trouble ourselves about but gather a pockful of wind, which will blow away with a blast of wind? 2. When we have riches in this world, how apt are they to take our love from Christ? For we cannot serve two masters, 1 John ii. 15. 'He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' 3. Many an one has lost their own soul in seeking the world; and what will all their riches profit them? Mat. xvi. 26. 4. The world yields no comfort in the time of trouble, when on a death-bed, or when the conscience is awakened for sin. 5. The world cannot give a ransom for our iniquities and transgressions when we shall stand before the tribunal. 6. The world hinders many a one to close with Christ on his own terms, as the young man in the gospel, and these in Mat. xxii. When Christ sent to them to invite them to be married on the King of glory, O, say they, 'Pray excuse us, for we cannot come; for the world hindereth us.' 7. Riches in this world are no token of God's love. It was well observed by one, 'That the world is like a picked bone, that the Lord throws to the dogs.' 8. The world makes many

many take on the very picture of the devil for pride; they, like Jeshurun, wax fat. 9. The world may be very soon lost, and this brings in new sorrows and vexations; then they are like Micah, 'They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?' They have a slippery grip that hold the world; an untimely fire, a storm at sea, or a wheen evil debtors, will make a lamentable change on a rich man. 10. It is a very difficult thing to gain the world with a good conscience. They that will be rich are liable to many temptations; temptations to cheat and lie, or else their stocks will not increase so fast as they would. 11. They that have the world must die, and leave it behind them; and perhaps to them that will give them but small thanks, tho' they have put their precious souls in great hazard to gather it to them, who, when they have got it, it may prove a snare and temptation to lead them on in a course of sin and iniquity. 12. Those that have much of the world have a great account to make of it at the great day, how they have improven that talent for God and his people; they being but stewards, God will seek an account of their stewardship.

But, notwithstanding of all these evils that attend them that have the world, yet I see a great many advantages in having it: for, 1. They may have more time and conveniency to serve the Lord than others, having every thing laid to their hand, and not being exposed to these troubles and difficulties that poor folk are exposed to, which proves a great hinderance to them in seeking and serving the Lord. 2. In having the world, they may relieve and help the poor members of Christ with it; the doing of which may bring down blessings on them and their posterity, Psal. cxii. 5, 6, 7. God will not let them want that gave but a cup of cold water to any of his children. 3. Rich folk have many friends; and, whatever troubles they be under, they have enough to comfort them; whereas poor folk, when in trouble, they may be sick, mourn and lament, and weep, but few to speir what ails them. 4. Riches may be a mean to humble them, when they consider that few rich folk be saved. 5. Rich folk have great matter of praise and thankfulness, that God hath so largely provided for them beyond many others as good as they; this should send them many errands to the throne of grace, that their riches be not a snare to them and others. When I had seriously pondered these things, I cannot but say, the vain world bears but small bulk in my eyes.

About

About this time there arose a terrible and sore corruption on me which they call self-conceit, and self-seeking wrought so strongly against me, that I wist not what to do; now I find it to my experience, that it was not an easy thing to be a down-right self-denied Christian; to be working for heaven as it were to be won by works, and to be denied to all, as if we had done nothing at all. O difficult work indeed! to be denied to prayers, to tears, and other religious duties; this was like a pang of the new birth, which is attended with a great deal of pain; or like an entering in at the strait gate, which was like to tear the skin from the bones, before I could win through. Then that word was borne in upon me. 'If any man will be my disciple, he must deny himself.' Of all the parts of religion I had met with, I found this the hardest to win at. I had attained to a name in religion; but all the name I was getting from Jesus Christ, was that word, *Mal. 3. 8*, 'Ye have robbed me of that glory due to me.' This word prest my very heart; for I knew it was true; for I carried that devil self-conceit or self-seeking about with me wherever I went. O self! that weary thing, self! what shall I do with it? it is like to destroy me. I think that motto may be written over to me, 'faithless and unfaithful.' Did I not give myself to the Lord? but my inward frame of spirit says the contrary.

Then I began to examine, what length I had come in the way of God, or whether hypocrites might not attain to all I had, and yet come short of saving grace? I prayed, and so did the proud Pharisee; I converse with the godly, and so did the foolish virgins; I communicate, and so did these hypocrites; I have a delight in seeking the Lord, and so had these, *Isa. lviii. 2*. I am free of gross out-breakings, and so was the young man, *Mark x. 20*. Now, what have I done more than these? they were not self-denied, neither am I. Lord, I must forward my petitions. This sent me to the throne of grace, to get self subdued: but I thought it grew the stronger on my hand.

At this time Mr John Moncrief had many suitable sermons concerning self-righteousness; for the text was in *Mark x.* concerning the young man in the gospel. I am sure he spoke as directly to my case, as if he had known it: how great a length we might come in religion, and yet lack the one thing, as this man did. This put fears in me, lest I should prove the same; but when he came to these words, take up the cross, and follow me; that was a day

day, which I desire never to forget, it being May 30, 1697.

He observed three things from the words; 1st, When Christ calls, we ought to give ready obedience; come, take up the cross. 2dly, Whosoever is bound for heaven must follow Christ, follow me, we must follow him through singular duties, and despised duties. 3dly, Whosoever will follow Christ, must do it with the cross on their back; the cross of losing all that we have in the world; the cross of pain and shame, and persecution and death. Where he put it to every one of our doors, whether we would accept of Christ on these terms or not? He proposed a question, how shall we know when Christ is calling us to part with all that we have? The answer was, when that which we had could not be gotten kept without sin and a snare to the conscience. I must acknowledge, this was a day of power to me, wherein my affections were so opened after the Lord Jesus, that I was content of him upon any terms whatsoever. O the sweetness I saw in that cross where Christ Jesus was, and the great advantages that attended it! O how kind and cheerfully could I embrace a burning stake for Christ! I took heaven and earth to witness, and the Lord to witness, that day, that no cross, no persecution, should separate me from Christ! But there were two things that appeared to me as crosses, the which I would not consent to; the one was, an absent God in the time of trouble and trial; the other, to be given up to a selfish disposition of spirit. O Lord, if thou deliver me from these two, I would take up any other thou pleasest; for I see it as impossible for me to be denied to my self-righteousness, as for a clue of thread to run up a brae; 'but draw thou me and I shall run after thee.'

After this I fell under fears, that all my resolutions would blow up when a day of trial cometh; for which cause I was frequently at the throne of grace with this petition, Lord, take thou my resolutions in thy own hand, and keep them from me, that when my trial comes I be not like the young man that came to Christ, as if he would have done any thing for eternal life, and yet, when he was put to it, he went away sorrowful; and, being convinced of the treachery of my own heart, I durst put no trust in it, but in as far as it was in Christ's keeping.

After this, I found the body of sin and death was very strong in me, and the predominant corruption was a continual vexation to me, so that I knew not what to do.

I could

I could reveal my mind to none, for I saw it was needless, neither thought I that any was in my condition.

I had a godly comrade, to whom I told something of my case, she was concerned on my account, and told me my case was not singular. This was some medicine to me, tho' it continued but a very short while. We prayed frequently together for the Lord's mind anent it; but all continued very dark, and, after performance of religious duties, I always found it grow stronger. I was brought this length of it, that I saw no remedy any where but in the kingly office of the Lord Jesus to conquer me. I set apart for fasting and mourning over my predominant idol, the 10 June 1697. And that which was my very heart's desire, as in the sight of God, was, to be made conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to have the spirit in me that was in him, and to have as great a measure of sanctification as was possible for mortals to attain to in this life.

I was persuaded that this petition of mine was attainable, otherwise it would never be commanded, 1 John 2. 'Walk even so as he walked.' Lord I turn over this command into a prayer; Lord, make me to walk even so as thou walkedst. There being none present but God here, I took my paper, pen, and ink to witness, that on condition I got my petition granted I am content of whatsoever cross thou try'st me with, but it is conditionally, if thou be with me, and give me thy holy Spirit, to conquer this idol of mine, which is contending for thy room. O Lord, come and be king, and rule over me this day, and make me to will nothing but what is thy holy will. O but this was a sweet day to me, wherein I got my heart and spirit poured out before the Lord, and got good ground to believe that my request was granted, from that word, Phil. ii. 13. 'For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'

A little after this, there was a word that the sacrament was to be given at Liffade; the thoughts of which were joyful to me, I intended to be there on the fast day, which I thought was to be on Thursday; I got up in the morning and made myself ready to go to the place, it being four miles from Edinburgh. O how cheerfully I went on the way! I spoke to none, and few spoke to me, I being alone. I cannot but say the presence of God was with me, and that word ran always in my mind, 'who is like unto the Lord among the gods?' which afforded me sweet meditations by the way. When I came to the place, I stranged that there was no gathering of the people there,

but I thought I am too soon here; and then I thought, I will go recreate myself a while about the water-side, until the worship be near the beginning. I stranged mightily what might be the reason that the mills were going, and the women were bleaching their webs; I thought this was not very suitable for a fast day. In the mean time that I was looking on the webs that were bleaching, there was a very sweet meditation given me. I saw some webs that were new laid down to the water, and these were very ill hued; I saw others that had lien longer, and these became white, and changed their natural hue; then I thought, that white web was once black, and as useless as the other, (for an unbleached web is of little or no use), but there hath been a great deal of pains taken on it, ere it came this length; what sleeping, knocking, wringing, watering, rubbing has there been wared on it? Now the meditation was this, the unbleached web was like the unrenewed soul on whom the Lord bestowed a great deal of pains before it changed its natural hue; what knocking by his word? what wringing and washing by afflictions; what watering by his gospel? then I thought, the white web was like a renewed soul, on whom these pains had taken effect; and, for as white as the web was, yet, by reason of its being used, it very soon grew nasty: so that it must be frequently washed: again, so the renewed soul, though it be sanctified, and made white in the blood of the Lamb; yet, by reason of its being in a corrupt world soon deiles itself; and so must frequently resort to the fountain for cleansing. By this time I thought the worship was near to begin: so I went to the church-yard, where I saw no appearance of sermon. I inquired when the first bell would ring? and if this was the fast day? they told me, that the fast was yesterday, and that I had disappointed myself. Now it is impossible for me to record what a sudden change this wrought on me, so as I could not get myself contained; but, as a dagger had been at my heart, I burst forth with grief and sorrow, that I had lost so blessed an occasion through my own negligence. O as the enemy unbelief wrought with me by the way to make me entertain harsh thoughts of God, and that he loved me not! which made me return the way weeping and forrowing, which I went rejoicing. When I came home, I threw myself on a bed, in an extreme fit of discontent, resolving, that I would not communicate at that time: but O how shall I record the long-suffering and patience of the Lord, who did not manifest himself to me in wrath

for

for so doing; but, on the contrary, he came all in love to me, and convinced me that I was in the wrong! This put a new edge on my spirit again; so that I enjoyed one of the sweetest afternoons that ever I think I experienced; and, as I was reflecting what might be the language of this disappointment, or what I should learn from it, this meditation came in my mind; what was the reason that I did not inform myself better what day the fast should be on? The reason was this, I never entertained the least doubt about it, but that it would be upon Thursday, because all the fasts were for ordinary, that day; so it never entered in my mind to ask at any. Then this followed as a lesson I should learn from it, that sometimes disappointments come from these things from which they are least expected: what then, if I be lying in any one sin unrepented of, that I have no conviction or doubt about, and yet it may prove a great disappointment to me in the day of the Lord: This put me on to cry to God, that he would search me; and try me, and find out all the secret sins and abominations, that ly in my heart.

On Saturday I went to Laffwade again, where Mr David Walker preached on John xi. 28. 'The Master is come and calleth for thee.' He had many sweet and desirable observations from the words. Mr John Anderson was on the testament's being confirmed by the death of the testator. But yet I found not that in these sermons that I could have desired.

At this very time I had a load weight of corruption bearing me down, and, like a draff-pock at my heels, which imbittered all my comforts. I retired myself to the fields, where I poured out my heart to the Lord; and O how my heart was set a longing after the Lord! and that he would come and take up a possession in my heart, and rule there as a king and Lord, putting every thing to the door that hindered his abode with me. I had a great concern on my heart for my parents and brother; then that word came to me, 'I will not leave you comfortless.'

This night being spent, in the morning I thought my frame was not like one that was to meet with the Lord. I had some down-castings of spirit through that day. Mr John Flint was in the action sermon on Rom. xiii. 14. 'But put ye on the Lord Jesus.' A comfortable sermon he had indeed; but yet I could take little encouragement from it. I was so lifeless; yet, over the belly of all oppositions, I went to the fifth table, where Mr John Moncrief served, it being June 27. 1697. I was not in such a lively frame

at this table, as formerly I have been in; and yet my heart vehemently put up this petition, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do for thee?'

When I retired to secret that night, I began to inquire what was the reason I was in so ill a frame at a communion; then I got these two meditations on it: First, I saw that ordinances were not to be idolized, so as to think that the Lord was to be limited that way. 2dly, A good frame was not to be idolized, thinking that because of it we will therefore be the more acceptable to God. This is bringing a price in our hand to the market of free grace. I saw, that if I had been always in a good frame, I would been apt to put tears, and prayers, and communions in Christ's room. Then that word came to me, 'I will not give my glory to others, nor my praise to graven images;' with this also, 'I have chosen you, but ye have not chosen me.'

And on Monday morning that scripture, Isa. xliii. 22, 23, 24, 25. was made very comfortable to me, and particularly applied to my case. After this communion I was wonderfully helped to that duty of meditation, so that I could scarce cast my eyes any way but I got some spiritual meditation. I got new discoveries of the miseries of an unconverted soul, and the blessedness of those that are interested in Christ, and the vanity of all created enjoyments under the sun. O but the candle of the Lord shined clearly on my tabernacle! And there were two scriptures given me, wherein there were things very remarkable, and from them I saw what the Lord was about to call me unto, John xiv. 27. 'My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you; not as the world giveth,' &c. The other word was, 'you shall be called Jedidiah.' Now, what this word Jedidiah meant I did not understand. I sought through the scriptures, to see if I could find any that was so called; at length I found, 2 Samueli xii. 25. Nathan the prophet tells David, 'he shall have a son, and he shall be called Jedidiah.' And when I looked to the margin, it signified, 'beloved of the Lord.' These things were very desirable to me, and filled me with wonder and admiration at the love of God.

Yet at this time the plague of my heart came upon me more dreadfully than ever before; there was a thorn of the flesh given me; an unmortified corruption weighted me so sore down, that I was like to call all my former experiences but delusions. Then that scripture was darted in upon me, Hos. viii. 12. 'I have written to him the great things

things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing. There was yet another piece of trial in my cup; I at this time had upon my spirit a secret exercise, which, if it had been known to the world, I thought it would be a stumbling-block to many; not only the wicked, but even the godly, would been offended at it; I wist not what to do, I could find none in my case but myself. The ministers in their sermons spoke to many cases that might be perplexing, but my case they never so much as mentioned it. This troubled me mightily, thinking it was but a notion of my own brain; therefore I could not believe that my exercise was from the Lord, which made me many times go to God, and beg to be freed from this, for it made me weary of my life; but, the more I prayed against it, it was the stronger on me. Then there were three scriptures given me to confirm me that it was from the Lord; First, 'I will not alter that which hath gone out of my mouth;' The second was, 'I am thy exceeding great reward;' The third was, 'but you have need of patience.' Then was I desirous to know the true voice of this exercise, but still it remained very dark, only I was loaded and weighted with extraordinary meditations; all which proceeded from this exercise. I was so loaded with them, that I was forced to it. When I began, the Lord furnished me immediately beyond my expectation.

Then came the tempter on me to dissuade me from such things as these, for they did not belong to me, and would but heighten my judgment one day; for my life was not squared like them. May not you live like other Christians, and not be taken up with such extraordinary duties? To this suggestion I gave consent; then there came a most fearful deadness and seized on me, and that scripture was borne in on me, 'refuse not him that speaketh': the omission of this duty brought me to a very disconsolate case and condition; I could not hear the word preached, so as to profit by it: I could neither read nor pray; I was like to forsake all spiritual duties whatsoever. After some time's consideration, I saw that it was a temptation of Satan, who was still ill-willing me when he saw merciful privileges bestowed upon me.

Then did I resolve to fall about the duty again, which accordingly I did; and I was no sooner begun to this duty but I found the Spirit of the Lord return to me; yet this exercise was in its nature to me so very strange, singular, and dark, that it wrought a great disorder in my mind, not knowing what to make of it.

One Sabbath-day I was more than ordinarily weighted with this, and was also desirous to know what truly and really these impressions could mean. I got a similitude, which resembled my case very near; but it being so dark I forbear to record it, until I see more clearly what the Lord will bring out of it; yet, in the mean time, I got scripture to confirm me, that, for as dark as it was, the Lord would bring it to pass, which was in Gen. ii. Yet I think a darker and harder dispensation never any was trusted with, that ever I heard of conversed with; for it not only appeared dark, but I thought dangerous to believe; for every thing that I thought was for the bringing of it to pass, wrought the quite contrary; which indeed wrought a great storm within me betwixt faith and sense, so that I was like to be crushed between the two, and I was held in a continual torment; for the wheel of providence seemed downright to contradict the promises; which sent me many errands to the throne of grace, and many bitter tears, heavy sighs and groans did it extort from me; yet the Lord did not leave me here to wrestle alone; but was now and then giving me a cordial, from the word, to hold me up; 'such as, the trial of your faith and patience is much more precious than that of gold; with this delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give thee the desire of thine heart.' But although these scriptures were sweet to me when I received them, yet the first temptation to misbelieve the promise imbittered all. I read frequently on Mr Gray's great and precious promises, and that with a great deal of satisfaction; there being many things so like my case, as any thing can be like another.

Now, the Lord only knows what tossings I was exposed to; of all the cases I was in, I never met with the like of this. O but the body of sin and death grew strong! my idol had too much room in my heart, which was like to be my death; I was one night in prayer extraordinarily weighted with the sense of indwelling sin, as good cause I had: for I think there was never any that had such a large measure of a body of sin and death as I, yet none of my sins could hinder the Lord Jesus to manifest more and more of his love to me. O the sweet intercourse I got with Heaven this night! I was more experienced what communion with God was. There were two things in Jesus, which were represented to me very lively, as these things which grieved his heart; especially from his own people: First, That for all he had done and suffered for

his people to redeem them from death, and interest them in glory; yet that they should doubt of his love at every trifle, this grieved him at his heart. Secondly, That it was vexing to the heart of Jesus, that, for all the tokens of his love he had given to his people, that yet they should entertain other lovers in their hearts, where he should dwell alone.

This was a sweet, and yet a doubting time to me; in which night I was made to kiss the cross, in whatsoever manner it was given me; then was this scripture given me, 'Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse.' O but, for all this, the body of death got up on me again, stronger than ever; which gave me ground to think, it seems I have never truly accepted of the Lord Jesus in earnest; otherwise it could not be that any other durst take his room but himself; and not only this, but it indisposed me for any duty whatsoever; in secret I was like a dry dead stick, fit for nothing; in public I was like a tree tossed to and fro with every wind of temptation, so that my life became a burden to me; for I could find the Lord in no duty. In this case I remained, until September 21st, 1697, in which night I was at an exercise where that servant of Christ, Mr John Hepburn, was on these words, Isa. lxiii. 3. 'I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me.' Where he came with a new offer of Christ to all that were there; and told us, that he had his Master's warrant for it. This was a night to be remembered by me; for my heart was made entirely willing to receive him; in which place, I took the minister witness, and all that were in the room with me, all in heaven and earth to witness, that I am thine for now and ever; and am content to forsake all other lovers, and to take Jesus for my all in all, on any terms whatsoever. There was nothing in the world I longed so much for, as to have the image of Jesus printed on my heart, that in every thing I might imitate him; and also to have communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Lord, give me this, and I care not what thou do with me, with respect to the things of this world. O keep me from the errors of this day, which are like to creep in among us; teach me the perfect way, wherein I should go. And now again, O Lord, as thy servant offered thee to me; so I give myself to thee, soul and body, to be for thee, and not for another; and believe, that I am accepted by thee. O keep this clear unto me against the time of temptation, when the enemy will come and turn all up-side-down. I received a scripture,

Jer.

Jer. iii. 19. 'And thou shalt call me my Father, and shall not turn away from me.' This was a very pleasant right to me indeed, where I was put out of doubt that I was the Lord's. Then this temptation came, and so are all the world, yea, even the wicked; but I get leave to call him, 'my Lord and my God;' and that it should be so, for now and evermore; written by me.

Elizabeth West.

IT pleased the Lord to give me another occasion of renewing my former engagements, which were dreadfully broken on my part. I saw that I could not walk with the Lord; therefore I must not let any opportunity pass of lending myself to the Lord. I also was at the time labouring under the power of a body of sin and death, and saw no remedy but in Christ.

There was word of a communion at Prestonpans; at the hearing of which, there arose a vehement desire in my heart to be there: I having experienced the manifestations of his presence formerly at such occasions, that called me to that place; also inward corruptions and outward dispensations of providence. I was persuaded I had the Lord's call to go there, from these two scriptures: 'Seek and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' The other was, 'Follow the Lamb wherever he goeth.' I met with some oppositions which had a tendency to hinder me to go there; but the Lord overcame them all. I cannot but remark two of these hindrances: in the first place, I had a fore and vehement pain of the tooth-ach, which distressed me mightily; so that I was capable of nothing but crying of pain. There was none that thought I would be so cruel to myself, as to adventure on such a journey to-morrow; and yet I was firmly resolved I would be there. The other hindrance was, that the weather was extraordinarily boisterous, with great rains, terrible winds, fire-slaughts, and thunder: so that I thought the house would blow down about me that night.

On the morrow, when I awaked, the pain of my tooth was quite gone from me, which I reckoned no small mercy; but still the wind continued loud and bitter, which made all the family plead with me to forbear my going there; but I gave a dear ear to them all, and away I came to Prestonpans; it being Saturday morning, the way was very pleasant to me, tho' otherwise unpleasant. When I met with the poor women, with their burdens of coals and salt on their backs, coming to the market of Edinburgh;

then I thought the badness of the weather does not hinder these from their earthly market : O what a fool would I have been, if any thing should have hindered me from the heavenly market !

When I came to the place, O how sweet and refreshful were these Saturdays sermons to me ! Mr John Moncrief was on Exod. xx. 24. ' In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee.' He observed, That ordinances were the tryffing-places between Christ and his people : and whoever there was that had been tryffing Christ to come to this communion, if they were come to keep the tryff on their part, Christ was also come to keep it on his part. He told us of four ways that Christ was coming to keep tryff with his people.

First, He was coming, as a merchant, to see what his poor people wanted, with all the wares of heaven ; and now, O communicants, what will ye buy the day ? Secondly, He was coming as a physician, to sick folk ; and I must tell one and all of you, there is not one among you all, but ye are sick, and that dangerously, of a sickness you must all die of it, if you employ not this physician ; and, for your encouragement, I tell you, there is not one in heaven but what was sick of this disease, and he healed them all perfectly. Thirdly, He is coming as a king ; and, will ye not open your hearts to receive him ? Fourthly, he is coming as a suiter, to court a bride for himself ; and will ye refuse to marry the King of glory ? Every one of these things were sweeter to me than another. When sermons were ended ; I being a stranger in the place, had great difficulty to get quarters ; but, when all my hope was past, how wonderfully did providence direct me to a place, where I was better entertained than I expected ?

On Sabbath morning, being October 9, 1697, I was big with expectation that all would be well ; and when I came to the kirk, I had no will to go to the first table, lest I should be deprived of a seat afterwards ; but about an hour before the sermon began, the minister of the place, Mr George Andrew, came to the kirk in his night-gown, and seeing but two persons at the first table, he uttered this lamentable expression, ' Will our Lord Jesus get but two brides to-day ? Woe's our heart, we have enough of weights on us, tho' ye add not this to the rest.' The words were scarce out of his mouth when the table was full, and I was there among the rest. I was no longer set down at it, but that word came with light, life and power, ' What is thy request, queen Esther ? and it shall be granted thee.'
I had

I had a sweet time at the table before the work began. Mr. George Andrew was on Matthew, 'Come to the marriage; for all things are ready:' where he made a free offer of Christ to all that would come and receive him on his own terms; in which place, I took him to witness, the heaven and earth, the sun that shined bright in my face, to witness, that then it was a sealed bargain betwixt Christ and me; for I was made willing with the offer.

When the minister came to serve the first table, he came with that word in his mouth, 'What is thy request queen Esther, and it shall be granted thee?' O then, my heart cried out, my request is, that the bridegroom's image may be stamped on my heart presently. Come, Lord, here is a temple for thee to dwell in, such as it is; but do thou to it as thou did to the temple, whip out all buyers and sellers, and every thing that defileth it. I have great idols, unmortified corruptions, who, Haman-like, strive to overcome me. O make me more holy than ever I was before, that the image of my Lord and Bridegroom may appear in my converse with others in the world.

Let me have as near a conformity to thee as ever any attained to. I this day request for more light in reading thy holy word; for as yet it is the darkest book I ever read upon. I also request for my poor parents, as formerly, and all my Christian acquaintances, ministers and people, and for our land in general; and that the gospel may never depart from Scotland. Come purge thy house of every thing that hinders thy appearance among the golden candlesticks. O Lord, grant me greater degrees of humility, both outward and inward; for I find my self-conceit sometimes like to overcome me. I here this day promise, as in thy sight, to stand to thy interest, though persecution should arise; and to lay down my life, if thou call for it. Come, Lord, tie both me and my resolutions to thyself fast, and I slide not back in trying times, and be not like that son, that said, 'He would go to work in the vineyards, but went not.' I must confess, to the glory of God, I got great liberty in seeking all these things, both in public and secret.

O but it was a comfortable day to me, wherein my interest in Christ was as visible to me, as if it had been written in golden letters before my eyes! It is impossible for the tongues of men or angels to declare the joy and comfort I experienced, and wherein I gave myself to the Lord, and in testimony hereof I take myself to witness, and all in
heaven

heaven and earth, that I am not my own, but the Lord's.
Written and subscribed at Prestonpans, October 9. 1697.

ELIZABETH WEST.

NOW, as I have been recording the wonderful goodness of God to my soul, so I will also record how I improved this mercy, or rather misimproved it. O who would have thought, that after this sweet and blessed communion, where I gave myself to Christ, that ever I would have embraced an idol in my heart again? Who would have thought, that, after such great manifestations, I would ever entertain such atheistical suggestions again? Who would have thought, that, after such tokens of Christ's love to me in the promises, I ever would have doubted and misbelieved, and called them in question again? But this I see clearly, that, as there is an unchangeable fountain of goodness and mercy in God; so there is an unconceivable ocean of sin and iniquity lying close in my heart, that is neither known to myself nor any in the world.

A little after this glorious communion, I was strongly assaulted with three great enemies, so that I was never in greater hazard all my days. The first was my predominant sin; it came back with such strength and force, that I thought, one day or other, I would fall by the hand of Saul; and that the Lord in justice would leave me to be a scandal to religion: the thoughts of this tormented me, that I should relapse so often into one sin. My second enemy was unbelief; I was made to cry out, all my former experiences are but delusions; and that because of the strength of indwelling sin which sore mastered me. The third enemy was atheism, the worst of all the three. It was so strong armed against me, that I had almost quit religion altogether. O how often did I express these words: 'Happy, happy are they that can believe solidly the first principles of their religion, and do square their life accordingly! O happy are they who believe that God is such a God as his word holds him out to be!' There were three things that I found great difficulty to believe in concerning God, which bred a great storm in my mind. *First*, That God was omniscient and omnipresent; that he knew every thought, and was every where present. O if I believed this, would I sport and play with sin as I do? *2dly*, That God was unchangeable; this I could not win over: once I thought he loved me, and now I think he hates me. *3dly*, That

That every sin deserves God's wrath and curse: O if I believed this would I sin with such deliberation?

I cannot tell how I was tossed with these temptations; but well I wot, they did me meikle skaith. A little after the sacrament was given in Edinburgh; but I was not a partaker, the temptation was so strong on me. However it was with me, I am sure it was a glorious day wherein I hope there were many souls sealed to the Lord: there was an extraordinary frame and melting of heart among the people, as if they had been all content of the offer of a reconciled God in Christ. Mr John Moncreif was on these words, Isa. xxvii. 5. 'Or let him take hold on my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.'

Through the whole day I was in a lamentable condition, not knowing what to do. On Monday after, Mr Archibald Riddet was on 1 Kings xviii. 39. 'And when all the people saw this, they fell on their faces, and cried, The Lord he is the God; the Lord he is the God.'

He observed, That it was a great and memorable attainment to win to the knowledge of the true God. Of all the sermons I heard at the communion, this was the most suitable to my case. When I came home to secret, I got a view of my present condition: I saw that unbelief was the greatest sin in all the world; it is a mother-sin, from which all other sins proceed; it was the root, and all other sins are the fruit; and there was something in it that struck at all the persons of the blessed Trinity; and that it brought with it ignorance and rebellion. O unbelief was like to destroy me! I thought I was the greatest sinner that ever was born, and that even Judas's sin was no greater; for I thought, that, if Judas had gotten repentance, he would never have relapsed into that sin again; but I have relapsed again and again. I wanted but a temptation to commit any sin. Now, I am in a great strait how to record the Lord's way to me for two full years, with respect to that dark piece of exercise I was showing of before; but this I can say, 'There was both mercy and judgment in my cup.'

There were two things that distressed me mightily in this dark and confused condition, First, That my case was singular; I conversed with none that could sympathize with me; for it was of such a nature that I could not name it: tho' at this time I was in society with some that were eminently godly: we met once a week for prayer; and I cannot but say it, as in the sight of God, that we never met but

but I got something of the goodness of God displayed to me; so that I found that promise made out to my experience, *Exod. xx. 24.* 'Wherever my name is recorded, I will be there.' My comrades thinking I was so well dealt with, they never pitied me, all me what like.

O this was afflicting to me! for I thought I was nothing but an hypocrite, because I was so helped in public, and so distracted in secret; for, by reason of this, I wanted the sympathy of others, and so was left to wrestle with my difficulties alone; yet there were two things that supported me in this lonely condition; First, That word, *Isa. lxiii.* 'I have trodden the wine-press alone:' where I saw that Christ was the only One that could sympathize with lonely cases. I got some sweet meditations from this scripture. The second thing that supported me was a similitude I got concerning my liberty in prayer with others, and my being so straitened when alone: I thought it was like a married couple, a good husband and an ill wife; now the husband seeing many faults in his wife, could not but chide with her when alone; but yet the intire love he had to her made him hide her faults when they were in company with others, so that all their quarrels were kept betwixt themselves, and not made known abroad. O is not this a wonderful piece of kindness in the Lord Jesus, to condescend so far to hide the infirmities of his people! O what a love I saw in that word, *Ezek. xvi.* 'And I spread my skirt over you, and ye became mine, saith the Lord God! Sweet were the meditations I got from this; O but the Lord was condescending to me at this time! and, if it had not been so, I could not have been supported under the consideration of the singularity of my condition; for there was no eye to pity me.

But there was a second thing that proved more perplexing and trying than any thing ever I met with before, and that was, the promises seemed to be perfectly contradicted by the providence of God; which mightily increased both unbelief and atheism to such a degree, that it is not convenient for me to record it. Now, to be particular, what these things were which so wrested my faith, and seemed to contradict the promises: the first was my father's conversion, for which I thought I got ground to believe, from *Psal. lxxxviii.* 'Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?' *1 Cor. xv. 58.* 'Your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' *Isa. liii. 10.* 'The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' Notwithstanding of these promises, I could see nothing like a fulfilling of them: for his conversation was the same

same as before. Oh! oh! it is not possible to record what grievous hours I have had upon his account, crying to the Lord to make out his own promises. The second was my growth in sanctification, for which I got many sweet promises to ground my faith upon. Alas! to this day I find corruptions grow stronger, and grace weaker. O then as atheism and unbelief upbraided me, and racked me, as it were upon a wheel, with the promises, casting them up in my teeth; especially these, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification. Sin shall not have dominion over you. I will be thou clean. I will write my law in your heart, and ye shall never depart from me.' But, where is the out-making of them? said the enemy. Surely they have been but delusions. This distressed me extremely; because I found the body of sin so strong in me, which sometimes sent me to the throne of grace, with these words in my mouth, 'O wretched one that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin?' The third thing was, I had to wrestle with the dark exercise I mentioned before. Notwithstanding I had gotten many confirmations, that it was from the Lord, from the promises; yet providence so contradicted the promises, that it was almost impossible for me to believe it. O but my enemies grew strong, and got me under their feet, as a captive-slave; and all that I could do, was to cry, 'Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is your God? Let him be made known to them.' There were three scriptures haunted me: 'First, The trial of your faith is much more precious than of gold. The Second, And blessed is she that believeth, for there shall be a performance of these things that were told her of the Lord. The Third, Though the vision tarry, yet it shall speak and not lie.' But, alas! faith and patience were almost worn out with me; faith and sense fell a fighting together, but sense seemed always to be victor.

But O what reason have I to bless the Lord, who kept me about his hand in the way of duty, so that my enemies get not all their will of me! Tho' it was often my fear, that I would give up with duty altogether; yet at this time I enjoyed more near and sweet communion with God, than ever all my days before, both in prayer and meditation.

This one thing I have to observe, that the nearer access I got, the stronger were my assaults on the back of it; so that sometimes I would be as it were all broken in pieces, even after I had been in a nook of heaven; then it

was that I got a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me.

There were two books I found great satisfaction in reading of them; Mr Andrew Gray, on the precious promises, and Mr Wedderburn, on the covenant; especially on these words, 'Although he make it not to grow.' I thought I saw much of God's mind to me in these books, concerning the dealing of the performances of the promises: but the greatest satisfaction I found, was from the word, the holy scriptures, where I got light, life and direction: and where I saw it was the Lord's ordinary way with his people, that, after they received the promise, a storm of providence seemed to contradict and clash against it. How encouraging was it to me, to look to Abraham, Joseph, David, Jeremiah and Habakkuk, and see how their faith was tried! These were my conversants and correspondents in these dark exercises of mine, and many sweet lessons I got from them; especially from these three scriptures: 'Wait on the Lord, do not fret; for he will deliver your feet out of the net. I waited patiently on the Lord, and at length he heard my cry. Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he will give thee the desire of thine heart.' Sweet was the meditation I got from these: from all which I saw, that it was my duty to wait patiently by faith, and the Lord in his own time would let me see an accomplishment of all the promises, from that word, 'He is faithful who hath promised, and is able also to perform.' Now on the back of all these things, when Satan saw that he had gained but small ground on me by his temptations to atheism and unbelief, he brought a new temptation to my door, which did me more mischief than any before; and that was self-conceit; and vain glory: O that abominable thing, self! What name shall I give it? it is a great deceiver; it is a God-dishonouring and a soul destroying thing. I shall tell you how it came to deceive me; in the mean time that the Lord was loading me with extraordinary manifestations of himself, then it would come and run in my ears, your diligence and pains in religion hath procured these things to you: ye deserve commendation indeed. And with such language as this it haunted me from duty to duty, so that I could never be quit of it: go where I would, it haunted me like a ghost. I also found a party in my heart, which joined with it; then I thought that cannot be one of the spots of God's children: for their end in every thing is, to glorify God; but all that I do is, to seek honour and praise to myself: then these words came

to me, Zech. vii. 5. 'When ye fasted and prayed, and did other duties, did ye it to me, yea, even to me?' Where I saw, that whatsoever duties we go about, if self-ends be the spur that puts us on to them, they are abhorred of by God, and we shall reap no advantage by them. Then was I afraid lest all the duties I had performed should receive no other stamp but self-seeking: this was very distressing to me, to think that as yet I had never done any thing for the glory and honour of God, nor had I any hope ever to do it; for I found that thing, self, so much glewed to my nature, that it was almost impossible to get it crucified. I truly think it is one of the most difficult parts in religion to get self-conceit cast out, and God's glory put in the room of it.

I was one day reading on Mr Samuel Rutherford's letters, where I found him have this expression, 'O self, self! that woful thing, self! it will not be satisfied, unless it ride side for side with Christ.' This was a little comforting to me, that any other of God's people had been in this case beside myself; and also I found Mr John Knox, in his life and death, was strongly tempted with it, even on his death-bed. And oftentimes Mr James Kirkton had this expression in the pulpit of self, 'That dead dog, self, it is as easy to pull the marrow out of our bones, as to pull self out of our hearts.' But, what did all things avail me, as long as I cannot get it put to the door, as I was persuaded they had done? All the encouragement I had, on reflecting on these worthies, was even such as it would be to a man that had broken his leg in such a place, and one comes and tells them, I know several that broke theirs in the same place. Oh, one would think that was but small comfort to the poor man. O, but says another, I can tell you of an excellent physician that restored them perfectly whole; and, if you employ him, he will do the same to you; for I can tell you his name and surname, and where he dwells. Then did I betake myself to that blessed Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ. O that he would deliver me from that woful distemper of self-seeking; and that he would dedicate and devote me to glorify him in every thing whatsoever, both in spiritual and temporal things! I must say, as in the sight of God, there was nothing I longed so much for as to be enabled to obey this command, 1 John ii. 6. 'Walk even so as he walked.'

As I was one day meditating what sort of temptations Christ was tempted with in his life, and what his carriage was concerning them; I saw he had strong temptations

from Satan, Mat. iv. of very grievous nature: but he overcame them: so this is very encouraging for us, to make application to him when they are tempted with temptations of the same nature. But where he met with any temptations to this, I could never find; this put me a little to a stand; but, when I had inquired more diligently, I found that Christ frequently expressed himself thus, 'I seek not mine own honour, but the honour of him that sent me.' And in Rom. xv. 3. it is said, 'And even Christ pleased not himself.' O this noble and excellent pattern of self-denial! to him I made application, that the same mind might be in me that was in him. Now the Lord was at much pains with me (I must acknowledge) to win me out of myself, though, alas, I have made but little progress in it as yet, by holding forth the heinous nature of this sin, and the unreasonableness of it, from many examples in natural things; but, above all, he took these gifts and attainments from me, that occasioned the growth of this sin; and I was threatened to be set naked and bare, as in the day that I was born. Then, let me be as painful and diligent as I would, yet could I not bring back one of these again, no more than I could pull the stars out of the firmament; so then events prove, that self is a great deceiver, and that my soul knoweth right well.

After this, I fell under an extraordinary deadness, so that I could apply myself to nothing; duties were a very burden to me, and that because I found not the Lord in them. And I thought the Lord had casten me off altogether, and that I was departed from him by a perpetual backsliding, notwithstanding of the promises on which I was made to hope, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you; and you shall never depart from me.'

In this dark case, I wandered from duty to duty; sometimes with some little hope, and sometimes swallowed up with doubts; but this increased my trouble the more, nobody pitied me, nor would believe the evil case I was in, which truly made me think I was nothing but an hypocrite, and that I was deceiving every body that knew me; for they thought me to be that which I was not.

I remember that, when I had been complaining to my comrades of my ill case, they oftentimes chided me for so doing, saying, it ill became me so to do; and what the better was I of complaining to them? And with such words as these they would command me to silence. Then would I reply to them, what needs you upbraid me for telling you the truth? The Lord knows I cannot help it; but he
that

that knows all things, knows that it was not my ordinary custom; for I was always ready to communicate the Lord's gracious dealings to my soul, when he was pleased to bestow them on me, and had a far greater pleasure in so doing, than in complaining. But what person having a broken leg, or a pain in the head, or a sore arm, will not be crying, O my leg! or, O my head! O my arm! though none could help them? For it is even an ease to the mind to complain, when there is cause for it. But, what shall I say? When no eye could pity me, then the Lord was not a-wanting to me: Christ is a true friend indeed, for he is always a friend in time of need. One day, as I was making ready to meet my comrades in a place where we met weekly for prayer; before I went, that word was made to me, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child? yea, she may; yea, she can; but I will never forget thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.'

O then, as my heart rejoiced in the Lord, hoping that the Lord would disappoint me of my fears? for I thought that I had run so far out of the way of the Lord, that there was never any went so far back, that ever was once in his way. But his way with me is all wonders. O that I could so record them, as God might get the glory of all; and that I might take shame and confusion of face to myself; and that others, that hear of these things, might fall in love with Christ and holiness.

Upon April 3d. 1698, 'It being Sabbath Morning,'

I HAD upon my spirit the impression of apostatizing, and turning out of God's way, and what dreadful consequences it had brought upon me: so that I was, as it were, in hell upon earth, what one thing, what other. I went to secret prayer, where I cried for an answer to these two petitions, 'O that I knew where I might find him! Turn me, O Lord, and I shall be turned.'

When I came to the public ordinance in the College-kirk, where that servant of Christ, Mr John Moncrief, preached on James iv. 8. 'Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.' He observed, that sin had made all mankind at a great distance from God; and that even the godly were at a great distance from him by reason of sin. He pressed this duty on all of us, to draw near to God, assuring us, that God would draw near to the soul that was seeking him; and, it being a little before the sacrament, he cried out, who knows but God hath sent his word to

call back some straying prodigal to himself? Then thought I, that is me, for I have been straying this long time. I must confess this was a day of power indeed; and the minister was made to speak as briefly to my case, as if I had conversed it with him. O such a sweet day! where all the graces of the spirit were put in exercise again, and I made willing to close with Christ on his own terms.

When I came home, I began to enquire, what might be the reason or end why the Lord suffered me to get so far out of his way, I being one of his own children whom he has promised to keep? In answer to this inquiry, I saw these four reasons: First, It was to let me see the great difference betwixt the way of sin, and the way of godliness.

Now the way of godliness was pointed out to me in these three particulars: First, It was a way of holiness. 2dly, A way of faith. 3dly, A way of duty. And so long as I walked in these ways, I found much pleasure and satisfaction, much comfort and delight. But my wandering out of these ways, into the ways of sin, led me in among so many pits and snares, mosses and mires, where I found nothing but confusion and discontentment, and was many times made with the Psalmist to cry, 'I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing.' O the great difference betwixt the way of godliness and the way of sin! The one is strewed with joy, the other with continual sorrow.

2dly, It was to let me see, that, tho' I would wander out of the way, yet I had neither strength nor power of mine own to turn myself into the right way again: it must be the strength of another, even Jesus, that I must lean to. Then did I see the insufficiency of my own righteousness, tho' indeed I never found a harder piece in religion, than to be denied to it. I truly think it is the only step that the most flourishing hypocrites never attained to; the getting out of self-righteousness, and to take the righteousness of Christ only, for justification and acceptance before God. 3dly, It was to let me see, that, when the Lord had a mind to come with a visit to a soul, nothing can hinder him, no not their former miscarriages; his love is free, and wonderful surprising; he comes leaping over mountains, and skipping over the hills of provocations. 4thly, It was to let me see, that a walking with God in his own way was more difficult than to find God. I saw many things in my nature that were apt to lead me away from God, even after I had found him. This bred in my heart

heart a strong and vehement desire after the Spirit of God to lead me, and to keep me in his own way: I thought this would be the only helper meet for me indeed, to teach me how to perform every duty, how to read the word, how to hear it preached so as to profit by it, to pray, to meditate, to fight, to employ Christ, to know God, to make a clean house for Christ to dwell in, to throw idols to the door, to converse with heaven, to walk on earth. O the advantage I saw in having the Spirit for my guide! I thought I could have been denied of any thing but this, to have the Spirit of God to dwell within me; of this I could not take a nay-say.

Then were these three scriptures borne in upon me: First, 'I will send the Comforter to you, even the Holy Spirit, who will teach you all things. 2dly, Neither will he deny his Holy Spirit to them that ask it of him. 3dly, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' That gave me ground to believe that my desire should be granted.

This was great encouragement for me to renew my covenant engagements at the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which accordingly I did, in the College-kirk, April 24th, at the seventh table, where Mr William Moncrief served. There were these three or four requests I had to present before the Lord, which my heart longed mightily for: the first was, a living in the Spirit, to have all my spiritual senses as really in motion in the spirit, as in the flesh. 2dly, To be clothed in the spirit with the robes of sincerity, humility, self-denial, zeal for the interest of Christ, love to all his ways. 3dly, To be walking in the spirit, as our blessed pattern the Lord Jesus Christ did, in holiness, faith, and patience, still eying God's glory in every thing. 4thly, That I might be a member of his body, to have a real feeling with all Zion's children, in whatsoever case they were. O how often did I put up this petition, either make me faithful and fruitful, or cut me down, for why should I cumber thy ground? These were my requests, as in the sight of God; and this day I engaged myself to be the Lord's. Written and subscribed by me.

Elisabeth West.

THERE is one thing I have to observe from the Lord's way with me, in my journey heavenward, it is up the brae, and down the brae. The whole way I was the last day, was, as it were, upon the top of the brae; and now, on the back of this, I must down the brae, and enter a new combat with my predominant sin again. Alas! my predominant sin was like my shadow, it never left me; O the confusion that in a short time it brought me under! till at last I concluded my spots were not the spots of God's children; for I thought I was one of the most abominable creatures that ever was born.

One night I dreamed a dream, and thought I saw a woman going thro' the streets, in the most vile and loathsome condition imaginable, she being a monster of uncleanness; she was crying, Will none have pity upon me? I looked upon her, but was forced to put my hands upon my eyes, so that I might not see her again: and I said to her, Woman, thou art such an object that none would pity. With this I awaked, and began to think on my dream: I thought, what if a king's son were coming by, and seeing this object, (that none would pity), should take her into his coach, and wash her himself? this would be thought wonderful kindness.

Immediately the 16th chapter of Ezekiel came into my mind, and in a little time I saw myself to be an object of a more heinous nature by far than the woman was; and yet the King of glory came by himself, and pitied me, when I was cast out into the open field. For many days the impression of this woman went not out of my mind; and many sweet meditations I got from it, all which consisted in these three: First, What I was by nature. 2dly, What Christ had done for me. 3dly, What I had proved, and was like to prove, after all this love. The more I read in this chapter, I still saw my own picture the more drawn to the life; but especially how ungrateful I proved to so kind a Lord; and had taken his jewels, and his fine embroidered garments, which he gave me to cover my nakedness, and had bestowed them upon the Canaanites and Amorites, my strange lovers; my idols and predominants got all the ear-rings, and jewels, and love-tokens I got from my kind Husband; and not that they forced them from me, but I gave them deliberately.

Then went out that sentence against me, 'O harlot, harlot, hear the word of the Lord.' I was under the impressions of these things for many days; yea, every verse in

this chapter had an exprefs language to me; fo that I thought myfelf unparallelable for abominations of all forts. In the mean time, when I was thus exercifed, I heard of a communion to be at Dalkeith; I was refolved to ly about the pool's mouth with all my grievous maladies; and alfo enquire, what might be the caufe why I was fo dragged and tormented with the corruptions of my heart? I went there, but durft not approach to the table, I was fuch an unclean beaft.

When all the work was over, I retired myfelf alone, where I received a ftrong conviction for neglecting the duty of communicating; the conviction came by way of queftion, and it was thus; "What brought you to this place? Had you any errands? If you had any, why came ye not to the King with them? And, if ye had none, why came ye here to difturb my people, and only to bear bulk?" With that my heart began to melt: and in his fight I could appeal, that I came not there without an errand; and that the weary fighs and groans I was giving could testify, that thofe brought me to this place, to fee if I could find out the caufe why I was in thefe confufions. I muft acknowledge, that the Lord was very gracious to me in this place; and, tho' I was not at the table, yet I blefs his name I was taken into the party, where I got fome difcoveries of his goodnefs and condefcenfion, and the caufe of my perpetual confufion. In the fame place he made me refolve, that the firft occafion of that nature I fhould not neglect it, as I have done this, tho' all the devils in hell, and corruptions of my own heart, fhould oppofe it.

Now, I come to remark and record another wonderful providence, which yet I think far excels all that went before. It pleafed the Lord, that the firft occafion I heard of, was in Fife at Largo; at the hearing of which, my heart leapt within me for joy, tho' indeed it was at a time when I was folety perplexed with in-dwelling fin; fo that the propereft name I could give myfelf was legions, becaufe they were many, and alfo unknown to the world; yet was I refolved to go to the market of free grace, I myfelf being a merchant that would want many things there. O how earneftly did I long to have a trading with heaven!

I met with oppofitions from without to hinder me to go; but they were no more to me than the blowing of a feather in the air; for to Largo I muft go. Another and I took our journey on Friday morning; and the way was very pleafant, for the Lord helped us to fuitable converse,

verse, inquiring at one another, what our errand was at Largo?

On Saturday morning, when we came to the place, Mr John Moncrief was on these words, Zech. ix. 9. 'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.' He told us, of a truth the King was coming; therefore make ready: do as Joseph did, when he went in before Pharaoh, shave yourselves, and change your garments.

Then Mr George Hamilton spoke on these words, Col. ii. 6. 'As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him.' As the one was telling us, 'the King was coming;' so the other exhorted us 'to receive him;' the Spirit of the Lord bearing witness with them both, that they were sent expressly from their Master, Christ: and that I hope many can put their seal to.

After sermon, one asked me, what I thought of this day? I replied, there is a prospect of an excellent market-day to morrow, we have had such a brave fair even. I was big with expectations, that the Lord's presence would be with us. That word, Psal. xx. and 4. went to duty with me, 'grant thee according to thine own heart; and fulfil all thy counsel.'

On Sabbath morning the tempter was not idle with me, to discourage and disquiet my spirit; and began to question with me, whether it was my duty to communicate, or not? I answered, I was persuaded it was my duty; for I got a sharp reproof last communion. I was at, and did not partake. But, did the devil leave me so? No, no: he took another way with me; for it was against his will I should communicate that day: he awakened up all the devils and corruptions of my heart; and when I saw them, I presently concluded I would not communicate that day: and, as for my unbelief, it mastered me to such a degree, that I could believe nothing, I was so struck with stupidity. Mr William Moncrief, who was the minister of that parish, (it being the first communion that was given there) being on Mat. xxii. 'Come to the marriage; for all things are ready;' in the time he was delivering these great truths (and wonderful and large were the offers he made of King Christ that day) there arose the greatest frame upon the spirits of the people that ever my ears heard, or eyes saw: notwithstanding of all this, I remained a stupid hard hearted creature; and still the temptation ran with me, it is not true the minister is saying, and many such suggestions were whispered in my ears by the tempter.

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When he came to fence the table, I thought he cut me off; for there was not one sin he mentioned, but I was guilty of it; yet there was a secret word borne in on me, 'this is the voice of my beloved.' But, how shall I testify what a change was wrought in a moment? And O that my recording of this were for the glory of God, and the edification of those that hear of it! how the Lord suddenly surprised me, when I was not thinking on it: so that I was never so sensible of an immediate call from the spirit of God, as at this time.

When the minister had declared faithfully who were not worthy to come to his Master's table, then he came to open his communion, whom his Master had warranted to call in: in which number I was; for I heard my name and surname there, and was persuaded of it, the Spirit of the Lord bearing witness with my spirit to the call, so as it could not be resisted. And that word came with force and power, 'now, this is the voice of my beloved, arise my love, my fair one, and come away.' With that there arose such a vehement desire in my heart to be at Christ, that I had no patience, but to the first table I went; where immediately that word came. 'I in you, and you in me, as the branches are in the tree.' What a frame of spirit I was in, is better felt than told; where my vehement desire was, that the Lord might imprint his image on my heart, and that the holy Spirit might take up an everlasting abode with me, and that I might have sympathy with the church in all her distresses: but I have so much to say, and so straitened for time, I besought the Lord to suspend my communion till I went to secret at some dyke-side; I must acknowledge that this was one of the most glorious days that ever I beheld; it was like an emblem of heaven; for the glory of the Lord filled the house. And as I came from the table, these two scriptures came into my mind: 'This day you have avouched the Lord to be your God; you are a chosen vessel to me, to carry my name.' O how did I rejoice, that ever the Lord privileged me to see such a day! For, though I had gotten nothing myself, yet considering what a glorious work were among the people, there could not be but occasion of joy; there was more than ordinary motion of the spirit among them. There were a great many young communicants at the second table, and indeed there seemed to be travailing of the new birth among them, which occasioned Mr William Moncrief to cry out, when he was serving that table also, king Christ, king Christ is come, and has gotten a bride among the young

young bodies this day. And as for the old people, there was a great weeping among them, so that the people might well be called Bochim. I cannot but set down some of the words Mr John Moncrief had, at the table he served; he said, communicants, what hath made all this weeping among you to-day? O say some, we are weeping with Mary, because of an absent Christ. Is this the cause of thy weeping poor soul? I shall tell thee, may be ye shall meet with Mary's comfort; Jesus may be nearer thee than thou knowest of; when she thought her Lord was gone, he says Mary; and presently she was comforted; Rabboni! Is this my Lord? O but, says another, I am weeping with Peter, because I have denied him. Well, let me say this to you, may be it shall fare with thee as it did with Peter; Christ says to Mary, go tell my disciples and Peter, that I am risen. Poor mourning Peter, he must be comforted. But says another, I am weeping with Christ himself at Lazarus's grave for love; the love of Christ makes me weep. If it be so, may not I then say of you, as the Jews said to Christ, behold how the folk of Largo love Christ to-day! We thought other congregations had gotten a singular talent, but Largo hath gotten ten the day.

But, when all the work was over, and I retired to a secret place, I met with a new difficulty; when I thought to meet with God, and get my communion, there was nothing there but deadnets; a cloud overshadowed me, and atheism came strongly on me, to such a degree, that I was tempted to self murder, to which sin I was never tempted before.

In that place I sat, in a very doleful manner, till it was very late; I resolved to die in that place; and many last constructions I drew; but providence so ordered it, that an acquaintance of mine, who came with me by the way, being in an ill case also, came seeking me, to see how I was. Now, it was a wonderful providence, how I was found out; for I was in such a secret place, that I thought none would find me out. The first thing she said to me was, what are you doing? for my own part I can neither pray nor think. I replied, and alas, for I am in the same case; what shall we do? After some discourse together, we concluded, that prayer with one another was our duty. O wonderful! the very time we were at prayer, I found the clouds dispelling and wearing off me; then I prayed, and found the Lord gracious to my soul. We parted from one another; but I remained the most part

that night in the same place, where I got my communion indeed in the largest boat that ever I experienced, which was a Bethel to me, or rather I may call it a nook of heaven. It being a ridge of corn near Lundie mill, and on the 1st day of August 1688. In this place I renewed my covenant; I got liberty in pouring out my requests to the Lord, both for myself and others, and that with a great deal of delight; the eyes of my soul were opened, and I got a sight of sweet Jesus; and there I saw too angels.

First, That the soul of a believer was like a chair, that nothing could fill but Christ; where I saw the vanity of all created enjoyments; such as, riches, honours, pleasures, possessions, friends, relations, and all natural and sensual enjoyments whatsoever, without Christ.

Secondly, I saw that in Christ which satisfies the soul completely; I saw him all things to his people; I saw him house and hold, meat and drink, parent and husband, children and relations of all sorts; and their salvation, which is best of all; so then a believer, that has Christ, wants nothing at all.

Then did I return to the house of God rejoicing, and to give thanks, that there was such a measure of joy on my spirit, that nothing in the world discouraged me; yea, I could not get myself contained from telling to those who were with me, what a large feast I had got: which brings to word of Mr. James Kirkton's in my mind; it is as difficult to conceal joy as to conceal sorrow. Every thing in my cup was joy; especially, that my atheistical devil had got its deadly stroke; so that I went on my way rejoicing.

But I must also remark some providences with respect to our outward man; the Lord had a special care even of our bodies, and ordered every thing better for us than we could have expected; but as we were coming home, we having the sea to cross; ere I came into the boat, I saw two men like ministers in the boat where we were going, and enquired what they were, (supposing them to have come from the place where we were) but in a little time they indeed discovered themselves what they were; they were two Episcopal Curates. I shall set down some of the conferences that past betwixt us and them, during the time we were on the sea. There was a profane wretch who pretended he would keep the company out of languor, by giving them a song: in which song there were both blasphemy and obscenity, the which none that had a ten-

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der conscience could hear, and not reprove it; one part of it being in mock of the covenant, the presbyter sacrament; and several of the worthy ministers were disdainfully mentioned in it. He was desired to be silent; but these two abominable Curates encouraged him to sing it over and over again, promising him a cup of ale when they came to the shore, he being such a hearty fellow. This began a great controversy among us, many things passed that are not worth the recording; only this, they said, in mock, have you not got a well purified church, since we were put out from you? To which one answered, purify it as fast as we can purify, ye come in and purify us again. And, when that same one was reprov'd for his unbecoming behaviour, he answered, in faith, the presbyterians in Scotland have made the way to heaven straiter than ever God made it. Then did one say, how can you take the name of teachers, and yet hear the word of God profaned, and never reprove it? and you can swear by your faith without any scruple? To which they replied, is faith an oath? then were they as men out of countenance, and wist not how to bring off themselves; but, being ashamed, said, I think you and I will not agree; God make us all good Christians, be of what opinion we will. And when we came to shore we separated, as those who were well content to be quit of one another's company. This gave me a new discovery of Episcopal government, that they, as to the generality of them, were but a pack of corrupt profane persons. And this I must say, that since the day the Lord did me good, he hath been instructing me of the errors that were in prelacy; for which cause I desire to bless God as long as I live: for I saw, that among them, and their principles, were no other than the dregs of popery. But I leave this, and return where I was.

I went home in a joyful frame of spirit, and with great delight I told what a glorious day we had at Largo; but this frame was but of short continuance with me. The old man, the body of sin and death, got up on me again, and soon turned my joy into mourning: sin grew very strong in me, and grace was very weak; and the first grace that I lost was watchfulness; and then, in a short time, I lost them all. Then wist I not what to do with that woful creature of mine, considering what a glorious time I enjoyed, and now what a desperate case I was in; I thought I was the greatest sinner that ever lived upon earth. Then

was represented as one that was shortly married on the king of glory; and now I had put out my hand to murder him. And what my judgment on the back of this would be, was inconceivable.

It is impossible for me to record every thing that past one at this time; only I thought, if God should damn me, if I could see wherein he would be glorified in it, I could not contend. Then did I begin to reflect wherein God would be glorified, if I should be damned; and in order to this, I cited myself as it were before the Lord's bar of judgment, to hear what sentence would be past against me; what were my privileges, my attainments, my engagements; and how I had improved, or rather misimproved them. Then did I suppose that I would hear the glorified saints and angels cry out, glory to God for discovering such an hypocrite as she hath been. Then did I suppose that I heard the godly, among whom I conversed and lived, when they heard my libel read, and the sentence past against me, all with one consent crying out, and saying, Is that the woman that was thought so religious, that we have seen weeping so serious-like at sermons and communions, and heard her talk so much of communion with God, and tells us so many experiences: and yet hath proved so and so? Glory to God for discovering such an unparalleled hypocrite. Yea, I thought I heard the very devils themselves justifying the Lord's judgment against me as righteous, saying, This is the greatest sinner that ever came to this place. Then did I pose with myself, what I thought of these things that were laid against me; and, when I had considered, the justice of God laid nothing to my charge but what my own conscience knew to be true, I could say nothing but, righteous, righteous art thou, O Lord, even in my damnation; I deserve no better at thy hand. Notwithstanding of all this, I was not altogether discouraged at this duty; there was yet some hope left me: hearing of a communion to be at Preston-pans, I resolved to go there, and witness before men and angels that I would justify God, let him do with me what he pleased. (Not that I thought God required of any to be content with damnation.) And tho' I was not intended to seek any thing there for myself, I being ashamed to seek any more mercies from God, having so shamefully abused former mercies so frequently; yet I thought I should make an errand there for other folk; such as my relations, my comrades, and the church; and may be, or who can tell out the Lord may be gracious?

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There were these two lessons, I got from this sad case I was in; First, That an unholy, untender life and conversation is the worst enemy that the work of grace hath, especially after signal mercies received. 2dly, I saw that the sins of the godly, and of his own children, were more piercing to Christ, and more heinous by far, than the sins of the wicked were.

I still remained under the impression, that all in heaven and earth would be set against me; for such a vile polluted creature was not, as I thought, upon the earth as I was. Then began I to reason with myself, what is this I am doing? If I be thus loathsome, then the fountain and pool is fittest for nasty souls. Whatever other thing I am in doubt about, this I am persuaded of, that I want not employment for Christ. I went to Preston-pans on Saturday, where Mr Matthew Selkirk was on these words, Psal. cxix. 'Establish thy word to thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.' I heard this sermon with great satisfaction. He made a large offer of Christ, if we would engage to be his servants; he gave us some properties of his Master; First, That he would work all the work, and yet he would pay all the wages. 2dly, He would never put a piece of work in his servant's hand, but he would be at the heaviest end of it. 3dly, All the work that his servants shall work, they shall get the profit of it to themselves. Now, where will ye get such a master?

When I went to secret, I got leave to pour out my heart, both for myself and others; and there I engaged myself to be his servant for ever. On Sabbath, Mr George Andrew was on Jer. 1. 5. 'Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant.' When he prest covenanting on all of us, which accordingly I did at the table where Mr Thomas Millar served, I desire to bless the Lord for many occasions of engaging myself to the Lord. All that I can observe from this occasion is, that I got leave to tell my mind to the Lord; but my communion was referred till another occasion, which was Sabbath next, a day never to be forgotten by me, it being a national fast thro' the kingdom, and that for the many abominations committed there: as also for the threatened judgments hanging over our heads, especially that of famine, there being a great scarcity in the land. In which day I drew up this transaction betwixt the Lord and my soul.

Edinburgh, September 11. 1698.

O LORD, this day being set apart for humiliation and supplication, I desire to join with the rest, to humble myself under the sense of my own provocations, that I have had a hand in provoking thee to lay the land desolate. Therefore, great Lord, though thou make me perish in the common calamity, I must acknowledge, thou art right, for I have sinned. Also, I desire to be humbled under the sense of the family's sins in which I live; and that because thou art not worshipped in it by my parents, as thou oughtest to be: therefore, although thou arise in particular against us' with visible judgments, 'thou art righteous, O Lord.' Also I desire to be humbled under the land's sins; for, from the highest to the lowest, all flesh hath sinned, and made public defection from thy ways; and especially, in breach of solemn covenant, which was the glory of our land, and in shedding the blood of the saints; for which we have all reason to mourn: by this thou hast been provoked, and that justly, to send dreadful plagues among us. I desire to be humbled for the sins of the real godly amongst us; and that because they are not adorners of religion, neither are we bringing forth fruit suitable to the pains taken on us: but thy way is evil spoken of by the wicked, when they see among the people of God so much pride, passion, and worldly-mindedness, selfishness, division, and many other evils: therefore, O Lord, just art thou, though thou shouldst proclaim that over us, thou proclaimedst over the barren vineyard, Isa. v. Now, O Lord, justly art thou contending with all of us: yet let me supplicate thy throne this day, in the name, and for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, with whom I entered into covenant last Lord's day, at Preston-pans, that the judgments thou art threatening by thy servants, and by thy providential dispensations, may be done away: nevertheless, if it seem thee good to bring them on us, O Lord, fit and make us ready for them; give us strength to bear the burden, that we do not apostatize and fall away when the trial comes. I supplicate this day, that if thou send thy sore judgments among us, that they may be mixed with mercy, if thou send famine among us, and break the staff of bread; then, Lord, give thy Holy Spirit unto us, that we may learn to feed by faith on the bread of life. Or, if thou send the sword among us, with a cruel enemy to avenge thy quarrel; then, Lord, grant we may stand steadfast and faithful to thy cause and interest.

that we turn not aside for their threatenings. I here this day give myself to thee; my life, my name, my natural enjoyments, if thou shalt call for them; only make my call clear, that I be not confused when the trial comes. And then, if thou give strength, I am content, tho' thou call me to a gibbet, or a stake to be burnt, or any other way thou sees meet to tryt me with; here I am, do with me what thou please. I have sinned, be thou glorified, and let me enjoy thee for ever, is all my desire. Or, if thou shalt send that sore judgment of penitence among us, then be thou our physician to heal all our diseases, especially spiritual ones: only Lord, whatever be the rod thou art going to lay on us, come with it thyself; and then welcome, welcome is the cross, in whatever sort it be. Now, O Lord, give me the victory over myself, this weary body of sin and death, which holds me daily in spiritual bondage; there is no enemy or judgment I am so afraid of, as this woful natural disposition of mine to all things contrary to thy holy law. O let my sinful selfish nature, from this day, be like the house of Saul, growing weaker and weaker; and let the new nature, which belongs to thee, be like the house of David, stronger and stronger; so that I may be strengthened to carry the cross cheerfully, rejoicing and unweariedly, when thou calls me to it. Let not my resolutions be like that man's, who came to Christ, and would do any thing to be saved; and yet, when the cross was spoken of, he went away sorrowful; but I lay my resolutions in thy hand, to keep them for me against the time of need; acknowledging my own weakness, for I have neither strength or will to do any thing; but I have chosen thee for my all and in all, from this time forth, and for ever: so let it be. Amen.

O Lord, thou knowest my requests this day, and at other times put up for my father, that thou wouldst work a second conversion on his spirit, that may send him to Jesus; for I am afraid, that, to this day, he is sleeping in a very dangerous condition; but yet I believe, that thou hast put words in my mouth for him; so I hope against hope. As also, for my mother, that if thou hast begun the good work in her, let it appear in her conversation, in changing her affection from things below, and setting them on things above. As also, for my brother, that a work of grace may thrive in him; Lord, let him see the folly of spending so much time in seeking this world's trash, and set him more in seeking the kingdom of heaven. I commit them all to thee, do with them as seems thee good; only be thou

tion glorified. As also, for thy glory's sake, remember this sinful church and nation; and, when thou comes with thy sore judgments, let them be for purging and purifying both ministers and people, that they may come out of the furnace all glorious, that other nations may see thou lovest to dwell in thy covenanted Scotland. Now, Lord, for Christ's sake, when thou in wrath visits this land, and although I should fall in the common calamity, yet let my soul be united to thee in peace; keep my faith, and do not suffer me to flinch from the least article of thy truths, but speak thou for me, when I shall be called to own thee publicly before the enemy. O let not my self-ends get more room there than thy glory! I must end this day with a song of praise, that the Lord hath been pleased to countenance and accept of an offering of mine hand; and that he would put me in a disposition for such a solemn day, to pour out my requests in the bitterness of my soul. Let this day be remembered by me, that I may sing glory and praise; and that, to eternity, my song may be, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, to him be endless praise and glory, for now and evermore. Amen.

Elisabeth West.

ON the back of this, I was mightily affected with the sense of the judgments, both present, and what I feared were coming. At the time there was a great dearth and scarcity in the land, as also a great sickness and death; we were also threatened with a foreign enemy, there being a continual report that the French were coming on us: thoughts of these were very terrible to me; O but the thought of an enemy was grievous to me on these two accounts: First, I was afraid, when I thought what abominable creatures they were; and the fear of being defiled by their abominations was worse to me than death itself. But that which most of all affected me, was the fear that all these things were but a forerunner of the Lord's leaving the land, and taking the precious gospel from us, and gospel-ministers, and making us again a habitation of idolatry; this weighted me indeed. I, as in the sight of God, consented to any trial whatever he would see fit to try us with, if so be it were to purge and make us more holy; but submit and take away the gospel from Scotland, that I would never do; no, no, my heart would never comply with that: there were great fears among all sorts

of persons, but especially among the ministers; the whole of their sermons ran upon this, to prepare for sufferings. I wist not what to think of these things where these scriptures were made useful and comfortable unto me, Isa. xxv. 20. 'Come, my people, enter into your chambers, until the indignation be overpast.' Zeph. ii. 3. 'It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.' Oftentimes, when I was in prayer with my comrades, I thought the Lord poured out his spirit on me, in helping me to plead for the church of Scotland; which gave me ground to think and believe, surely the Lord will not leave Scotland altogether, when he is employing his own spirit to plead for it. And frequently I got that word for it, Psal. cxxxiii. 'This is my rest, here will I dwell for ever.'

There is one thing which I cannot but remark; about this time I had a comrade, whose converse and company was very refreshful unto me sometime a-day; for she was the first that ever I opened my mind to, when first the Lord took a dealing with my soul (and found great satisfaction in so doing.) A great while before this, she told me that she is going to desert the ordinances, and leave hearing of the ministers; and that because there were many faults among them, which conscience could not away with: they were not like the ministers in the late presbyterian times; they had made public defection from the truth in many things, and, in plain terms, she told me, that she thought it was neither her duty, nor the duty of any of the Lord's people, to own them for ministers. Now, I knowing she was a godly woman, and had known much of the Lord's way on her own soul; she was also one that attended all occasions of preachings and communions, and spoke always very favourably of our ministers, and now to see such a sudden change, put me in a strait what to think. Then did I inquire at her, what she had a mind to do? or whom she would hear? She told me, there were two or three singular ones (whom they call the Commuir folk) who only had the testimony among them; these have kept their garments clean from all the pollutions of the times. These I resolved to hold for my ministers; for there are none in all the church of Scotland that keep so strong and true to the presbyterian interest and the covenanted work of reformation as they have done. I hearing this, was somewhat curious to see them; when I came to the place where they were (which was in the Canongate tolbooth) I conferred with them, and thought them good people; but for me to think them righter than

all the ministers of the church of Scotland, this I could not understand. I visited them frequently, and great pains were they at to get me in among them; but this I could never think of, till one time I was in a very ill case, corruption growing on my hand, and I could find no strength to fight against my predominant sin; I could find the Lord in no duty, neither in public, private, nor secret; then thought I with myself, what if it be true that these people say, that the Lord is not to be found in ordinances? So then it is needless for me to seek him where he is not to be found: may be this is the cause why the Lord is deserting me in public and secret duties. Then had I some thoughts of leaving the ministers, and following their way; so accordingly I went one sabbath afternoon to spend it with them, and to see what I could get there; but, instead of meeting with the Lord, I met with many a sad challenge for abstaining from the public ordinances. Then thought I, what if the word has been preached this afternoon that would have done me good? This vexed me mightily.

Then did it become a piece of exercise to me to know which of us was rightest; this sent me many times to the throne of grace, begging that he would direct me in that way which he would own and countenance, so that I might not halt betwixt two opinions. For which cause I set some time apart, that the Lord might, by his holy Spirit, answer me these three questions:

First, Whether or not there be real food to be got in the ordinances, which they say is not?

Secondly, What shall I think concerning the wrong that are among our ministers, which, they say, hath provoked the Lord to lay them by, as so many Eli's?

Thirdly, Whether or not it was my duty to abide by, and wait on the ordinances, as they were established at this day?

As for answer to these questions, the Lord was very gracious unto me and condescending, and gave me a particular answer to every one of them.

As to the First, Whether there was soul's food in ordinances or no? It was represented to me, in a similitude, as if there had been a company of people gathered together, and there was one among them trembling for cold, and starving of hunger; but seeing at a distance a well covered table, with all sorts of food, and a good fire to warm him at, the person, in this extremity, had a great desire to be at them; but the rest of the company dissuaded him from

from it, persuading him, it was but a painted fire, and a painted, covered table, saying, tho' ye were at it, ye would find no satisfaction: so that you had better bide with us. But the creature, being in extreme necessity, must go and see whether it be so or no. The which, when the person came there, found it to be real food, and real warmth; it was no painting, nor fancy: for he found it to be both comfortable and strengthening. This was made as applicatory to my soul, as the sun shines: as if the Lord had said to me by this, Let them say what they will concerning the fruitfulness of ordinances, do not you know, to your soul's experience, that you have found both food and warmth in them, that hath both been comfortable and refreshing to your soul, at such a communion, at such and such a sermon, where you have got that in public, where you have been seeking in secret? Then was I resolved, as to this question.

Now, as to the Second, What to think as to the ministers wrong steps they have made? I was answered with that word, Isa. lvii. 17, 18. 'For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote me: I hid him, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart; but, for all this I have seen his ways, and will heal him.' O but this was satisfying to me; for it was as if the Lord had said unto me, "It is true that they say of the ministers, "they have committed many faults indeed; but notwithstanding of all this (in my sovereignty) I have seen their ways, and will heal them. Then, since I will pardon their faults, and heal their ways, it becomes you to have no feud at them any manner of way, but hold them for my servants."

As to the Third question, whether or not it was my duty to wait on the ordinances? To which I was answered, it is your unquestionable duty to give your bodily presence to the ordinances. Then did my heart and soul cry out, 'Now, I bless the Lord that hath given me counsel.' And from that time I durst never entertain a thought of leaving the ordinances.

But, to turn to my old distress again, the body of sin and death, the predominant, the idol, the sin that so easily beset me, it got a grip of me, as I thought, faster than ever. I think, if I were quit of these vile desires and affections of mine, I would live one of the pleasantest lives in the world; but this comes in and mixes water with my wine; let my attainments be never so great, this pulls me down again, so that sometimes I wot not what to do or think. The Lord

Lord of his free goodness is pleased to hear me when I cry unto him, and answer me concerning any thing that troubles me; but in this particular I cry, and get no satisfying answer; any answer I get, is worse satisfying to me than if I got it not, for immediately on the back of it a storm of providence comes and contradicts it, so that I was tempted to call all the promises delusions, both for it, and for other things.

The comrade whom I mentioned before, though we were divided concerning our hearing and not hearing the ministers, yet we still kept up fellowship for prayer one with another; she being the only person to whom I revealed my mind concerning this, that so much vexed me. We set some time apart for fasting and prayer, that it might please the Lord to give me some outgate of the dispensation. We were both helped of the Lord to perform this duty, and on the back of this I found a great composedness and quietness of my spirit for a considerable time, where I was again allowed as near access to the throne as ever before.

Secret prayer was then to me, as the beginning of heaven, where I got communion and fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and was confirmed concerning this exercise of mine, with a body of sin and death, that it should have a blessed issue, both for the glory of God, and the good of my soul. In the mean time I found two parties wrestling within me, the one party was for believing, and the other party was not, because it had no sense in hand: but, glory to God, that kept me in the way of my duty, so that the enemy did not always prevail against me, for, if one thing discouraged me in duty, another thing bears me up. I have often compared myself to a ship on the sea: sometimes I would have a fair wind to take me to shore, where I would be no more exposed to such tossings again: ere ever I wist of myself, the wind would blow contrary, and the waves would rage so, that I thought ship and passengers, and all would be lost together, I being as far from landing as the first day I set out. Then let any suppose in what case I would be.

I remember one sabbath, as I was in the College-kirk, there was one Mr. Alexander Rule who preached; he was a son of worthy Dr. Rule's: and although this Mr. Alexander proved in a very little after to be a very naughty and abominable person, yet he was God's messenger to me that day: his text was, John xiv. 1. 'Let not your hearts

hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe in me also. His observation was, that a discouraged frame of spirit, because the dispensations wrought contrary to the inclinations, was highly displeasing and dishonouring to the majesty of God: it wronged three of his attributes, First, his wisdom, as if he knew not what was best for you. 2dly, His power. 3dly, His faithfulness, as if he had promised what he would not perform. In his application, he reproved them that lived more by sense than by faith. I thought every word in his sermon had more weight than another; and if it were sweet in hearing, it was more sweet in meditation after I came home, where I got my heart poured out before the Lord: and this I can say, there was never a time that I got liberty, or any thing like nearness to God, but the church of Scotland lay near my heart, as also my parents, and all my godly acquaintances; and I thought I was highly privileged, when I got leave to hold up their cases to the Lord; then was these two scriptures given me, 'Your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; I will be your God and guide even to the death.' Notwithstanding of all this, I found my treacherous heart bent to backsliding; so I saw it was my duty, as I was often breaking, I should be often binding myself to the Lord.

Edinburgh, January 1. 1699.

THIS day I set apart for fasting and prayer, as also that I might get myself of new fastned to the Lord. There were two or three duties I was mostly taken up with this day; First, Resignation. 2dly, Supplication, in which duties I gave myself up to the Lord in covenant. I remember a word Mr James Kirkton frequently express, concerning covenanting: in your covenanting, said he, make it as sure as you can think it, write it, speak it, and pray it; for which he gave that scripture, Neh. ix. 38. 'And for all this, we make a sure covenant, and write it.' So I in my covenanting this day, I made an intire resignation of myself to his service, that I might serve him in my generation. I in this place gave myself to be wholly at his disposal, my relations, my enjoyments, my name, my substance, if ever I should have any: in a word, I gave all to the Lord to do and suffer whatever he pleases, and calls me to, on condition he gave me strength to do it. I deny all strength of my own to do any thing that is good, daily experience hath taught me the truth of this; therefore, O Lord,

gain and again give up myself to thee, in a sacrifice to thee this day ; and in testimony hereof, I have thought it, have spoken it in prayer, and now am writing it.

In the next place, I come to supplicate the throne of grace, as a poor needy beggar, all made up of wants. Here this day supplicate, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that I may get an inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, so that the same mind may be in me that was in Jesus Christ, the same Spirit of faith, instead of unbelief and atheism : the spirit of wisdom, instead of ignorance ; and sanctification and holiness instead of corruptions. O that from this day I might get my heart, mind and meditations set on things above, instead of my carnality, and wanderings on the mountains of vanity ! Now, O Lord, thou knowest every step I am to go through this weary wilderness : here this day accept of thee to be my guide, that I turn not to the right or to the left. If it shall please thee to tryt me with adversity and affliction, then Lord grant me patience and submission : be thou present with me by thy Holy Spirit to shew me my duty : and let not unbelief prevail against me, as formerly. But, if it shall please thee to tryt me with that dangerous lot of prosperity, I accept of thee, this day, as a king to rule and conquer me. O let me not be left alone in this condition, but charge every thing that is mine, to be thine. If any of thy poor members want, and I have, then, I beseech thee, draw it from me to supply them ; make me a real member of thy body, that I may have a sympathy with all that are in distress. I this day, take heaven and earth to witness, that I am content to be denied to any temporal enjoyment, on condition that I get communion and fellowship with the Holy Spirit ; and that, in whatsoever state or station thou set me in, let me always have a conversation becoming the gospel ; and whatsoever duty thou calls me to, give me light and strength to perform it, and let thy glory be the very end of all my actions whatsoever ; also learn me a lesson of retaining the spirit ; keep me from sinning, or doing any thing the spirit cannot dwell with. Now, O Lord, thou knowest I will never keep a word I speak, unless thou give me a double portion of thy Spirit ; so I put all my resolutions in thy hand to keep them till I stand in need of them. I must acknowledge, this was a day to be kept in remembrance by me : I got leave to pour out all my requests before thee, both for myself and others, and to believe I was accepted

cepted. About the evening, that word came, 'this is my rest, here will I stay, for I do love it well.'

On the morrow after, it being a day wherein much foolishness is committed by the generality of people, I was occasionally among some of them, but had better been some where else; I found the frame of my spirit growing very carnal; this afflicted me mightily when I went to duty. But, ere I came away, that word came, 'I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and thou forgavest the iniquity thereof.' All that I shall say as to the superstitious observing of these days (which I may call the dregs of idolatry) is this, I wish the very name of them were done out of our land; for they are good for nothing, but to destroy the life and power of religion, and to foster up carnality and sensuality. Now to give an account how I spent this year, is somewhat difficult for me to do; but this I am sure of, it was a year of many miseries, and also of some sore trials.

In the beginning of it, I lived, as it were, in the suburbs of heaven; in the next part of it, I lived, as it were, at the very borders of hell in my spirit; in the last part of it I met with some very remarkable providences.

I shall begin with the first part, in which time I was greatly privileged with the assistance of the spirit in every duty, but especially in reading of the scriptures; a sweeter time than this I never enjoyed; for I saw that in the scriptures, which I never saw before. The reason why I mention this, is, because a little more I was regretting, that, of all the books I ever read, the scriptures were the darkest to understand. I was like the Ethiopian Eunuch, I read, but I understood not. There were two things I compared the scriptures to; First, I thought they were like a cabinet full of shuttles, and in every shuttle there was a jewel, but the cabinet was fast locked, so that I saw nothing but the outside; and the keeper of the keys was gone, who was the Spirit of God. Secondly, I compared them to a candle, the which I had in my hand to light me through the dark wilderness; but what the better was I? For the candle was not lighted, which made me to stumble, and that frequently; but in his own due time he opened the cabinet, and lighted the candle; so that I saw very excellent sights well worth the recording, it being the fore-runner of a deferred promise, and confirmed in the same.

O but the Lord multiplied mercies on me at this time, so that they past my recording! I again hearing, that

the sacrament was to be given at Preston-pans, it was no small encouragement to me, considering what glorious days I had seen and felt there.

On the sabbath before, I found some vehement desires arising in my heart to be there; where I beought the Lord, that he would not suffer me to sin that sin that would hinder my communion with himself; for I saw more in having communion and fellowship with God, than in having all the enjoyments in the world. I cared for nothing but myself; they were but all loss and dung, in comparison of sweet Jesus; yet, through the week I was in a very ill case, being deserted, I could do nothing but sin, and wander in wrong ways: this bred fears in me, lest I should meet with an absent God in the sacrament.

On saturday I went to the place, where Mr Matthew Reid was on these words, Mat. v. 8. 'Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God;' Where he observed, that those who were truly seeking God, should so see him, as to have communion and fellowship with him. This was good news to me. But after him, came Mr John Moncrief, who preached on these words, Lev. x. 'where Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, and were consumed before the Lord.' Where he observed, that rash approaches to God in solemn duties, were very dangerous. He spake to many dangers that were in it; at length he started an objection; well, say some, if it be so dangerous, we shall not put ourselves in that hazard; for we shall bide away. Then did he hold out the sin of neglecting such a solemn occasion; and that it was a sin of a very grievous nature, and was as dangerous as the other. This put me to a stand what to do, considering my misbehaviour through the week; but when I came home to my quarters, and went to secret duty, the Lord came wonderfully to my soul with a great manifestation of his love, which struck me with wonder and astonishment at his free and undeserved love. Where the instances of Naaman the Syrian, and the widow of Sarepta came in my mind, which wrought strongly on me; so that I could do nothing but wonder and praise, and praise and wonder.

On the morrow, which was February 19. 1699. That morning as I awaked that word seized on me, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in.' Where I was helped to open my heart to receive the king of glory in all his offices, as Prophet, Priest and King.

Mr George Andrew was on Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold I stand at

‘ at the door add knock, if any man open the door, I will come in, and will sup with him and he with me.’ From this text he spoke particularly to my case, as if he had known my errand there. I communicated at the first table, where I got as sweet communion as ever I experienced all my life. I cannot testify it with my pen, but this I am sure of, I never got such an humbling sight of a Mediator as now; it laid me in the dust, thinking what was I more than others, that he should lay his love on me and pass by many others, that never committed the half of my sins? For, or a truth, I saw myself the greatest sinner that was upon the face of the earth; for my sins were attended with many aggravations. O my salvation the greatest wonder that ever was!

Angels wonder, glorified saints, wonder! and let your harps be spent in praising the Mediator of my salvation. O praise him for me, until it shall please him to bring me among you, where I shall be for ever singing praises to him. I think, my voice shall be loudest in wondering at free grace, when I consider what I was, whose I was, and what I am like to prove; and yet nothing could hinder free love. Now, O Lord, what wilt thou have me to do for thee? tell me, and then give me strength to perform. I have a body of sin and death, which will hinder me; for it is like to be a very heavy burden on my back, as I go thro’ this weary wilderness, if thou support me not. I could have wished all my Christian acquaintances a crumb of what I was feasting with, that it might make them lay by their farms and merchandise, as to the too hot pursuit thereof. O for some of this to protestants in France, who are in the flames of persecution! For I thought it would sweeten the hottest furnace that could be kindled by men. I fought also for my parents, and brother in particular, whose case lay very heavy on my spirit. Now, the Lord was very gracious to me, and strengthened me to pour out my requests; but I saw that I must wait by faith, for an answer to them. What name shall I put on the place where I was, at the head of a yard in Preston town? it may be called Bethel, or Ebenezer; for there the Lord helped me, and engaged for me to fight all my spiritual enemies; especially unbelief, atheism, and myself; then were the graces of the spirit set on exercise; but especially these two, faith and love.

I also had some impression on my spirit of the judgments that were coming on the land, which had this language to me; in the day of your plenty, prepare for famine.

I also saw some extraordinary trial that I was to meet with shortly,

shortly, from what airth I knew not, I must acknowledge, to glory and praise of the most high God, that this was one of the greatest communions ever I enjoyed; for it was not only sweet to me, on the communion-day, but even some time after the thoughts of it were a new communion to me.

Wednesday next I set apart for secret duties, separating myself from worldly business, to spend that day in secret; where I got even all that my heart could wish for; (but, what if I shall say, that this was my farewell communion for some years after?) there was not the least doubt or cloud remained; and many sweet lessons got I taught me this day, which I desire never to forget. I was so full of joy, that I could not conceal it; but, as I was telling to some of my comrades, what God had done to my soul, one of them says to me, surely you have some great trial to meet with, your privileges are so very great. Ah, alas, alas! her words came soon to pass.

Now, I am in a strait how to record what grief, trouble, and anguish of spirit I was brought under; I may say, I never knew what troubles of spirit were till now; all that I met with before, were but flea-bites in comparison of this. Satan, the great enemy of man's salvation, and also of their comfort, he begins anew with me, with sore and mighty temptations; the ground of which was this, as I was shewing before: I, at this time, was greatly countenanced in reading the scriptures, so that I could not pass over a chapter, but where I got some lesson taught me, which was both pleasant and profitable to me: I continued in this for some time. Then came the tempter to me, with these suggestions, what is this you are doing; cannot the ordinary duties of religion serve you, as they do many better Christians, but you must enterprise duties that belong not to any of your station? With these and the like temptations, I left off reading the scriptures this way, and read them as carelessly as before: but it was a woful doing to me; for it was the forerunner of much vexation on my spirit. On the back of this there seized a great deadness on me, so that I could perform no duty: and that word was frequently in my mouth, 'Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone? does his word fail evermore?'

On Saturday morning, which was the first day of April, (one of the dreadfullest day's that ever I saw), that word ran frequently in my mind, 'Be still, and know that I am God.'

‘God: I will be exalted among the heathen.’ Yet could perform no duty; I went to secret, but found nothing but deadness; I went in the afternoon to meet with my comrades, which was the day we met together for prayer; but, I being so ill, I parted with them without praying, which was not my ordinary; I came home again to try secret prayer; but still continued in a dead disposition; then did I resolve to go spend some time in ordinary discourse with the rest of the family; but I had not fitten long there till there arose a terrible storm in my mind, unconceivable by any but myself: now you may see by providences, that the promises are all contradicted; so that all that you have called faith on the promises is perfectly delusion and fancy. This touched me at the quick, and soon made me leave my company. I went to duty, as in a fit of distraction, with that word in my mouth, now the child is dead, and there is no more hope for me; I can believe no more either for one thing or another; all that ever I met with, hath been believing on a lie. In this sore extremity, I fell down on my knees, and said this shall be the last duty ever I shall perform; I will now live in the neglect of all religious duties. And many such like expressions I uttered, which are not convenient for me to set down; yea, I thought it impossible for men and angels to reconcile the promises and providences together. There were some promises given me, for a ground of hope, for the out-making of some things which were matter of faith to me; but in this tempestuous storm they were all made shipwreck of, and lost; the first was my own salvation, the second was the performing of this dark exercise. God only knows what condition I was in; all other trials were nothing to this, for I was like to lose my natural judgment. In the mean time, when I was thus tossed, these scriptures sounded in mine ears, ‘Is there any thing too hard for the Lord? heaven and earth shall pass away:’ but ‘one jot of my words shall not fail. And of all that the Lord hath spoken, there hath not one word failed. Only believe,’ &c. But there was so much unbelief and atheism in my heart, that I could believe nothing: but like the deaf adder, I stoppt my ears and would nor here any such thing. O this night! this dismal night, where I was made to question, whether there was any reality in religion, yea, or not? Then was I tempted to go and burn all my former experiences: for they would prove all nought at last, says the tempter: so it is best to put all out of the gate in time: for, if any shall hear of your written covenant

and

and meditations, and yet see you in hell, how will this gnaw you? But to this temptation I did not yield.

In this case I could do nothing but sigh and groan; for I was put beyond weeping. Then did that word come, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' But all things were alike to me, for I could believe nothing. Strong were the effects that this night's trouble brought, both on my body and spirit; I fell in a great fit, and was very melancholy, so as it was observable. One questioned me, what it was that ailed me? for she saw a great change on me; but this question I would resolve to none, (but one only comrade), for I saw that none could help me; so I kept it as quiet as possible. Then took I a great dullness in my hearing, so that I heard none, unless they spoke very loud. I was very ill of a cough and pain in my side, so that it was concluded I was dying. O, but what was all that on my body, in respect of what I felt on my soul? duties were a burden to me, for I could find ease in none of them. Then did I begin to sympathise with them I heard prayed for in the kirk, under trouble of mind. I found that word to be true, 'A man may bear his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?'

All the glorious days I had enjoyed were no more comfortable to me than the thoughts of seeing would be to a man who had his eyes put out. Great and terrible was the blindness I was under, and remained for some time sicker; so that, for that time, I could record nothing for edification, I was so distracted and distempered at this time. I read frequently the 130th Psalm with some sort of satisfaction; but I no sooner closed the book but I closed all in with it. Again I went to some solemn occasions, but I found nothing but an absent God.

I was at Uphal communion; May 1. 1699, at Lasswade June, at the West kirk both the days in August, where I got some small glimmerings, but they were hardly discernable. O then, how it gnawed me to the heart, that I had so filthily yielded to Satan's temptations, in laying by these duties wherein God had so singularly countenanced me in! I saw it to be down-right resisting and quenching the spirit. But, strange and wonderful hath the Lord's way been with me; he was again pleased in some measure to manifest to me some tokens of his love; but it was with a rod in his hand, to correct his stubborn, rebellious, and apostatizing child; and well did I deserve it. But happy rod! O blessed cross that Christ comes in!

Upon a day in November, being Friday, as I was hearing sermon in the Tron kirk, I found myself in a very wandering disposition, and wearied mightily of the sermon, and I was resolved to come out before prayer; but, fearing I should be an ill example to others, I sat still, but very impatiently, for my heart was not where my body was. In the mean time, when Mr Meldrum was baptizing some children, there was a dog bit my leg most desperately. I no sooner received this but I saw the hand of God in it, and could not but acknowledge, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord,' in all thy procedure against me. Now, how shall I observe the goodness of God in this providential dispensation? There are two things which I think worth the remarking after I came home, and knew the hurt I had got, and wist not what to apply to it, for it seemed very dangerous: I retired alone, where the Lord seemed to be in speaking terms with me; this refreshed my spirits. And, in the mean time, when I was thus perplexed, there came a physician to the house providentially, not knowing that any thing ailed me; but it was the Lord that sent him; and he applied something to it which, in a short time, proved effectual, contrary to the expectations of many. Adly, I must acknowledge God wrought a piece of providence, to get me a quiet place where I might be alone. The whole day almost, in the afternoon or morning, there were a great many people that met in our house, so that I could not have got an empty corner in it all; but providence so ordered it that they convened not together till near the evening. I saw more in this than I can tell; during which time I got leave to pour out my mind before the Lord, and could not but bless him, though I had been made a cripple, which he prevented. And that word ran much with me, 'he doth all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.'

A little after this, my brother takes a fever; when I heard first of it, it struck me a little dumpish; but, before I went to the place where he was, I retired alone a little space, where that word came, 'His sickness is not unto death, but to the glory of God.' In which place I was made to act faith for his recovery, or ever I saw him, or knew what ailed him. When I came to the place where he was, I saw his fever increasing, and that strongly; and in two days or three my faith began to stagger, for I truly thought he was dying; but, as I was at duty on his account, that word came, 'Wherefore are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy

'thy tears, I have added to his days.' With this also, 'He is ever mindful of his promises.' He still grew worse, and I revealed my mind to one that I knew was truly religious; and asked him what I should think of these promises, if he should die? his answer was very good on the matter, but very unfavoury to me.

It pleased the Lord he got a cool, and pretty well recovered, so that I thought all fears were over. About nine days after, one comes from him and tells me, he is in the fever again: he told me in such a haste, and so surprisingly, that I took a terrible fit of trembling, and could scarcely speak. He relapsed and grew worse than ever, and faith and sense had a strong battle in my breast; for I persuaded myself he would die, and what then would become of the promises? Unbelief wrought so with me, that it was almost impossible for me to resist it, and still harped upon it thus, if the promise fail, so will all the rest ever you got. Only the Lord knows what distress this brought on my spirit, I could scarcely get it hidden. When my father and mother perceived something grieved me, they chided on me mightily, thinking it was for fear of my brother, and fearing that I would cast myself in sickness also, but this was the least of my fear. It is very observable, while I was thus vexing myself, I durst not go to prayer, for this was one of Satan's stratagems, always to keep me from prayer, by telling me, I need not pray, for I am not heard. How shall I testify the goodness of God, who is always a friend in time of need to poor, faithless, undeserving, and ungrateful me? This night I was brought to a sweet calm and composure of spirit; and while I was in meditating, before I went to prayer, these scriptures came with life and power, 'I am thy salvation; through many tribulations you must enter into the kingdom of heaven.' By this I was warned I was to meet with some more trials near at hand. Then came that word, 'Despise not thou the chastning of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction:' by these words, 'neither be weary,' I saw that my trial was to be lengthened out for some time. Now do I know that the Lord favoureth me because the enemy prevaileth not against me. When I went to prayer, unbelief, as a liar fled, and durst not appear before the Lord, but in its own colours, which was that it was an enemy to the glory of God; so that I might know it would be an enemy to me, where I got leave to plead against it, and that Christ as a king, would conquer all his and my enemies. In that duty I was also confirmed by my brother's

ther's recovery, from that word. Psal. cxviii. 17, 18. "He shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." "He hath chastened him sore, but not given him over to death." Notwithstanding of this, I saw I was to lose a very near relation, which I judged would be my father and mother; the thoughts of this were not easy to me on many accounts, but let the Lord do with me and mine, what he pleases.

It pleased the Lord, that my brother recovered of his fever, altho' he was a great deal worse in this, than in the first, during which time I had many sweet hour's communion with God. I may say affliction is a good thing, when the Lord is in it.

After this night, the fright I had gotten before, it had flown in my breast, so that it boiled, and was very troublesome to me. This was a new trial to afflict me, and still the word ran in my mind, 'Be not weary of his correction.' O that I knew how to commend the Lord's way to all, both to strangers and friends! And it becomes me well so to do. I lay under many obligations to serve him, and this among the rest, that he was my physician, both to soul and body, and blest simple medicines, that were applied to it, for I would not let either chirurgeon or doctor lay their hands on it. It pleased the Lord, that I recovered of this trouble also; and a song of praise was put in my mouth for it; yet still that word ran with me, 'Do not weary of his correction.' By this I thought, that my trials were not all over, thinking that there is some trouble I am to meet with yet.

About this time the condition of my father lay very near my heart, and that because I could see nothing like a change on him to the better, but particularly on the 7th of January 1700, it being Sabbath, I was strangely weighted with it, and was made to plead the out-making of the promise on his account, that he would shew wonders to the dead, I having the impression of his death on me (tho' at that time he was well in health.) I often made use of that word in prayer, Psal. cxix. 'It is time to work, Lord, it is time for thee to work.' He is growing old, and wearing near his grave; O Lord, let free grace be glorified in his salvation, according to thy promises.

On Thursday next, in a sudden he takes a purging of blood; and in the afternoon he vomited excessively, so that none thought he could put off this night; I knowing nothing of it, for I was not at this time in my father's house.

On Friday morning they sent and told me, my father was not well. No sooner I heard this, but I concluded it was his death; which immediately put me in a praying posture for him, 'that now free grace might be exalted in his salvation, according to his promise.'

The first sight I saw of him, I told him with tears, that it was death approaching, and besought him to lay it to heart. He made me little or no answer; but grievous were the looks he gave me; which sent me to the throne of grace, inquiring at the Lord, what could be the matter I was sent so many errands for him, both at communions and other solemn occasions, and so loaded with him for ordinary in prayer, where I would have got liberty for him, when I could have sought no other thing, since now they were all like to come to nought, he on a death bed, and no appearance of a work of grace begun yet: This tossed me up and down in a terrible manner as ever any was. It was not the loss of him, as my parent, that so troubled me: no, no; in this respect, I could have parted with him freely: but the thing that troubled me was, fearing he would be a cast-away. The thoughts of this made me utter these words before the Lord in prayer, O Lord, in the days of thy flesh, some came to thee for their servant, some for their son, some for their daughter, some for themselves, and they got all good answers; now, I come for my father; O deny me not, for thy own name's sake. Consider, Lord, that my great enemy unbelief is waiting for my halting; and, in appearance, this is the last request ever I will seek for him. And many such impertinent expressions I uttered this day; I being like one half out of their wits, when I was alone, still seeking a sign out of his own mouth, that might be some ground of hope to me: but I was denied this, and was upbraided for my unbelief, in not believing his naked word of promise.

At afternoon he seemed to be somewhat calm, and every one had hopes of his recovery. But, for my own part, I believed none of their words, and told them they would be disappointed; for it was not only death, but death very near; so I desired them not to be secure. A little after this he again vomited blood so excessively, that we all thought he would never move again.

Now, only the Lord knows what a rack my spirit was on until the time he recovered his senses. Then I posed him what he thought of himself? All the answer he gave me was, that he was in a most deplorable condition all the time Mr John Moncrief was praying with him. I cannot but

but say, there were some words he expressed which yielded no small satisfaction, which were these; "O Lord, thou dealest variously with the sons of men, some thou callest in the third hour of young age, some at the sixth hour of riper years, and some thou reserves to the eleventh hour of old age!" O how reasonable was that word to me, none can conceive!

As the Lord helped me, I tried all sorts of duty, where-in I thought he would be found; I joined in prayer with another, and we both got great liberty in pleading for him. On Saturday morning, that word came, 'The devil is gone out of thy daughter;' yet still my fears continued. Then that word came, 'Ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principalities and powers.' O what I saw in that word, 'Ye are complete in him!' Yet, for all this, my spirit was like to be overwhelmed. There were some of my godly acquaintances that pled at the throne of grace for him, and they brought me all good answers; but this could not quiet me either. O the perplexity I was in thro' this day! I was almost demented.

About nine o'clock he grew very weak, and his speech failed him; then I cried to the Lord to hear my last request for him; I continued pleading, with a troubled and vexed spirit, until it pleased the Lord, in his great condescendency, to bear in that word in my mind, Mal. iii. 16. 'He shall be mine, in that day that I make up my jewels; and I will spare him, as a man doth his son that serveth him.' This brought with it a sweet calm and composure of spirit to me; so that I came patiently, and saw him depart this life, about eleven of the clock at night, being the 13th of January, 1706.

On the morning, being sabbath, I was strongly assaulted to misbelieve that he was well; but I laboured to resist as much as possible, knowing this was a secret I was not to dive in, since now the sentence is past. O how much of God's love and power did I see in the dispensation of providence! With the Psalmist I may sing of mercy and judgment; tho' the cup was bitter, yet it was sweetened with mercy. It was very bitter to us that he was so suddenly pulled away; but it was a mercy, that there was one hour lengthened out to him, and that he fell not down dead on the street; for he was not half an hour come home, when he fell in such a dead fit, that none thought ever he would come again; now, if this had been on the street, he would both have been a spectacle of wonder to those that past by, and it would have been a wonder if ever he had recovered, being

ing in the cold of the year. Now is his word made good, that he doth all things well; there is none living in the world that hath more reason to record the loving-kindness of the Lord than I have, tho' alas, none walks more unanswerably to the mercy received, every manner of way; to my shame I may speak it. After all this, that word continued with me, 'Despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be ye weary of his correction.' By this I knew that there was some other trial I was to meet with, it had not the least supposition what it might be.

Yet, fearing that my mother (by reason of her grief she was under) should be taken away, I thought, may be that would be it; O but I found a great unwillingness in my heart to part with her! But it pleased the Lord, that was not my trial, which made all other things the easier borne with by me.

A little after this, I sustained a considerable loss, as to the world's part of it, and that by a near and dear relation my own, which was another piece of my trial. On Saturday night, as I was coming from our society, where we met for prayer, one comes and tells me how all my affairs were going; but they told me it in a very unchristian-like and imprudent manner, which a little surpris'd me; but immediately that word came, 'Thou art my sure portion, Lord.' This brought me more solid comfort and joy, than if they had told me, that I was made an heir to a monarchy; and, notwithstanding my loss, I cannot say it was an hour's trouble to me; in the mean time, I got many sweet meditations on the vanity and uncertainty of all things in this time, and how great fools they are, that set their heart on any thing here away.

About this time, there happened a very lamentable providence in the city; the 3d day of February, about ten at night, a fire broke out in the meal market, the like of which, I believe, was not seen in many generations; it burnt so vehemently, that it was thought the most part of the city would have been consumed; the flames were so terrible, that none durst come near to quench it; it was also with a very great wind, which blew to such a degree, that, with the sparks that came from the fire, there was nothing to be seen through the whole city, but as it had been showers of fire like showers of snow, they were so thick; it was to me an emblem of hell, and oftentimes Sodom came in my mind that night. O but it was a sad and lamentable sight to look upon, to see the most populous place in the city (the Parliament close) in a red flame, the flames flying in the

the elements, and no hands endeavouring to put them out. I cannot but remark, that this night these words were fulfilled, which I heard pronounced against the city by Mr John Moncrief, in the College-kirk, Sabbath after the fire in the Canongate-head; the words were these, Micah vi. 9. 'God's voice crieth to the city, and the men of wisdom shall see thy name; here ye the rod, and who it is that hath appointed it.' There was much of God to be seen in this fire; for he gave warning of it before it came: Sabbath before this, there was such a smell of burning, that these in the Meal-market, the Kirk-heugh, and Parliament-cloze, went from house to house, to see if there was any thing like fire among them, but none could be found: and this broke out the Saturday following; and, for my own part, a considerable time before this, I had such impressions of fire on my spirit, that sleeping and waking it was with me; and that word accompanied my fears, the sun rose fair to Sodom, that day it was destroyed. But, passing this, there were some things very remarkable in this fire: First, It began in his land who gave the covenant to the hangman out of his own hand to be burnt, being youngest baillie in that time; and it was very observable, he had never the use of his hand as formerly after that time: and now God in his providence hath sent a burning among his lands, so that that which was eleven years a building, was not five hours of burning: notwithstanding this, he was a good man, and lamented to his death the burning of the covenant; he was also very helpful to the Lord's prisoners during the late persecution: yet it was well observed by one, as burning was the sin, so burning was the punishment. 2. It was observed, that as it began in his land who burnt the covenant, so it never rested till it came to the place where it was burnt, and there it stayed without any cause whatsoever, but it had its commission from the Lord. 'Hitherto shall ye go, and no further.' This opened the mouth of both good and bad, to express, O the burnt covenant! O the burnt covenant! This is come upon us the burning of the covenant. 3. It is very observable, that this fire did resemble the fire of the late persecution, kindled by a prelatic party against the presbyterians, in these four respects: 1. It was not in the power of any to stay this fire, till the Lord in a wonderful way did it; so neither was it in the power of any to stay these tyrants, in their rage and fury against the Lord's people, till by a wonderful providence, wherein the Lord's hand was eminently seen, a way that could never have been conceived by any.

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brought about their delivery. 2. This fire in a very short time laid many families desolate; and so did the malignant party in a short time lay many families desolate: they bereaved women of their husbands, and children of their parents; some they forfeited, others they banished; so that great was the desolation they made through the whole kingdom. 3. This fire had no regard to one by another, neither the rich for their honour and dignity, nor the poor for their poverty: so was it with the episcopal party, they had regard to none: the nobles and gentles of the kingdom, they suffered at scaffolds and gibbets; no respect was put on them, the flame was so violent; as to the meaner sort, there was no pity to be shown to them either, but all must go one gate. 4. It is very observable, that the most part of them that suffered at this fire were rich people, and any thing they lost was but their household-furniture, and their outward accommodations for a while; but few or none of them lost their stock there, it was somewhere else, so that the fire could not reach it; so we may apply this to these that suffered under the fore-named party; they were for the most part rich in God's account, and any thing they lost was but their outward accommodations for a while, and some of them were even restored a hundred-fold in this life: but it lay not in their power to take their stock of grace from them, that was in a surer hand, they could neither head nor hang that, it was better laid up, than to come among their hands: and, tho' for a while they suffered here, yet one moment in heaven would make it all up to them; for their light affliction, which was here but for a moment, wrought for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I cannot tell what effect this present dispensation had on my spirit; I thought it dang me stupid and senseless in the time of it; so that I could not do so much as pour out a prayer for the quenching of it; only this, it confirmed me of the vanity of all earthly enjoyments whatsoever, and how great fools they are who spend too much time in laying up treasures on earth, seeing that even that, which takes both time and pains of gathering, a few moments will undo and waste to nothing; then, where is their labour? I think a man or woman, in their gathering the world, is like a spider working its web; O what pains doth it take in spinning it out! and when it is spun, it sits down in the midst of it to take its rest; but when the maid comes to sweep the room, one touch of the besom sweeps it clean away, as if it had not been.

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O but the world be a foolish thing to trust to? and they are the greatest of fools that trust to it; they are fools in these three respects. 1st, It is known to the world that the world is a very uncertain friend to listen to; for, tho' it be a fair promiser, yet it is an ill performer, it is both a cheat and a liar. What tho' it promise pleasure and satisfaction to the owners thereof? It is but a mere cheat, for we see that none hath more sorrow than those who have it; what trouble and vexation have they in gathering of it? What weary care and anxiety in keeping of it? Tho' sometimes, let them keep all their hands about it, yet it will away. Riches take unto themselves wings, and oftentimes take the flight when there is most need of them, and that is when old age and sickness comes on; that motto cannot be written upon the world, 'A friend in time of need.' I remember a very good observation one hath on the world, speaking to those that made a god of it; he said, it was a token of great wisdom to keep the god they choosed; but it is a sign of the greatest folly, to choose a god they cannot keep. 2dly, They are fools in this respect, shall all the pains they are at in working and hoarding up the world gain them any thing? It is but for the shortest time, none of it will pass current in another world, where we are to be through all eternity. It is said of the godly, that 'their works shall follow them' to another world; but the worldly man leaves all his work behind him. Are they not great fools that spend so great time to so little purpose? Psal. xlix. is a clear proof of this. The rich fool in the gospel, and the rich glutton, should be as beacons and warnings to all. I remember a note of a sermon I heard by that servant of Christ, Mr John Blair; and tho' I was but young when I heard it, yet I cannot but say it had some effect on me, which made me remember it better than I have done other things of as great moment: as far as I can call to mind, this was the first public preaching that durst be avowed by the presbyterian ministers. In this sermon he was shewing what a foolish and vain thing it was to be seeking the world, and forgetting to make ready for eternity; where he told us a story of a nobleman, who had a fool for his divertisement, and being so well pleased with him (being one of the greatest fools in that country) he gave him a staff, and desired him to keep it till he found a fool greater than himself, and give it to him: sometime after this the nobleman fell sick; so he sent for his fool, to divert him with some of his fool sports; when the fool came to his master, he asked him,

him, what ailed him? O, says he, I am going to another world. Then said the fool, how long will you stay? a month, or the like? No, says the nobleman, I will stay many months. How many months will you stay? will it be a year? O, says he, it will be many years. How many years will it be? says the fool. It will be to all eternity, said the nobleman. O then, said the fool, master, that is a long journey to eternity; what have you provided for this long journey? Nothing at all, said the nobleman. Then, master, said the fool, take your staff again; for you are a greater fool than I am yet. Assuredly, any may think this was a wise man's answer to a fool, rather than a fool's to a wise man. This story was told, to shew what folly it was to provide for the vain world, and neglect to make ready for eternity. 3dly, The world-gatherer is a fool, in this respect; for he gets neither thanks nor good deeds for all the labour he has been at, from them that possess it after him. How justly may they be compared to a bee, who is at great pains to work a curious piece of work to lay up its winter provision therein? Whereas this industry of theirs is the only mean of their overthrow. Is it not so with those who are at great pains to lay up sums of money for others, and neglect the one thing needful? It will prove their ruin at the great day, and those that possess it will think no more of them than they that did at the honey of the dead bees. O how happy are they, that, in using the world, learn not to abuse it! not running on extremes, either as to the gathering of it, or to the spending of it.

At this time the Lord was at great pains to instruct me of the vanity of time's enjoyments, not only from other folks experience, but even by experience of my own, which he was pleased to lengthen out to me, one after another, as he saw good for me. I may say, in some respects, my trials were like these of Job's; they came all one after another; the hindermost seemed to be the foret and sharpest; but by the by, I must say, it hath been good for me that I was afflicted; even with respect to things of the world.

It pleased the Lord again to visit this city with a very merciful visitation, the sacrament being given that day seven weeks after the fire, which was a day of great solemnity indeed. At this time I found myself in a very uncomposed frame for a communion; and I resolved not to communicate at this occasion, notwithstanding of the many invitations I got by the Lord's servants, unless the

Lord would call me himself, in such a way as formerly I had experienced: for which cause, I got a sharp rebuke, and that in a similitude: if a king or a great person, having a great family of children, intending to make a great feast or dinner more than ordinary; the day is appointed for it, and they get all warning of it; the dinner is ready and bell ringing, to call the children to dinner; but among them there is an ill-petted, ill-natured child, who, notwithstanding of all these warnings and calls, will not come, unless the father come himself, and call him particularly: now, suppose the father to be so condescending, as to come to such an one, what would he say? May it not be supposed he would say this, what means this ill-nature of yours, to be so disobedient to my call? And with an angry countenance say, if ye will not come, bide; see who will be the greatest loser; were it not pity, that I should confer this honour on you, more than on the rest of the family, who came when the servants called them? And what are we better than they? Now, suppose on the back of this reckoning, the child should come to dinner; the comfort of it would be laid with the thoughts of its disobedience: and when the rest are making merry with their father, and with one another, at the table; he in the mean time could not look a blyth look, but sigh, and sob, and weep for his former miscarriages.

Whatever others may think of this similitude, I am sure it was applicable to my present case in all its circumstances; and though indeed I durst not stay away from the table, yet I met not with that joy and comfort I met with sometime before; for it proved a very dark and comfortable communion to me; for I had not the comfortable sense of God's love to me, though indeed I dare not deny it altogether. It is only my own carriage that makes the distance so great, and no change in his love. O my soul, bless the Lord, that his presence is not tied to a communion day, but that he is to be found even at other times, where there is need for it; he being always a friend in need, and that my soul knoweth right well.

On the back of this communion I met with another very weighty trial, (which I shall forbear to speak of), and that which made it the more trying to me was, that it came from an unexpected air, of which I was little thinking. Lastly, It appeared to be a contradiction of former promises on their account; but what shall I say? It may put my hand on my mouth, and be silent; for the

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Lord hath done it, and that to my profit; for by it I was instructed not only of the vanity of the world, but also of the vanity of all friends and relations whatsoever; so that I can subscribe to that word, 'trust not to a friend, put no confidence in a brother.' At this time I enjoyed a very sweet and comfortable time, where I saw, that all dispensations of providence to me were but only for trial and not for wrath. Then the word came frequently in my mind, 'Weeping may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning.' By this I understood it to be the morning of the resurrection, where all tears shall be wiped away from my eyes.

There was a day, which I cannot but put a mark of remembrance upon it, I being in a very disconsolate and dead frame: but providentially I forgathered with a comrade on the street, whose company and converse hath many times been refreshing and comfortable to me. We very seldom met, but we prayed ere we parted; but this day, I being in such an ill case, I refused, and got me up to go away; but blessed be the Lord, I continued not long in this resolution. We both joined in prayer; and never did we experience more of God's presence with us, than at this time, there being more than an ordinary measure of the spirit poured out on us both, so that our mouths were filled with praise ere we parted. This was in April 1700. O how wonderful is his way with me! In every step of providence his hand is to be seen.

There was yet another very heavy rod laid on my back, which weighted me very sore down for many days, months, and years; so that I now see it hath not been for nought that that scripture was given me, 'Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction.' Now, the trial was thus, on the back of these outward troubles I mentioned before, it was thought convenient for me to return to the family where I had been some time before; in which family, I must acknowledge, I was not kindly dealt with by all in it, and that far beyond any thing deserving in me. I wanted no outward accommodation that I could desire, I found so much favour in the eyes of them among whom I dwelt. Yet the thoughts of returning to this family were like present death to me, which I could not give consent, and that for these reasons, First, The worship of God was not set up in this family. 2dly, There was much strife and contention in it. 3dly, There were many other sins committed in it; such as mockery at religion, and despising of his ministers, which were very grievous to my heart. I do not say that this

was done by all in it; no, no; for there were some in it who had an heart-love to religion. 4thly, The last time I was in it, I had God's mind and call to leave it. And now, after all this, to return, was to me as the going back to Egypt again; yet I was set fore on by severals, with many fair promises made to me; and I was thought ridiculous to refuse such a good opportunity. My mother also was very earnest I should go back, and told me, it would vex her to a degree if I disobeyed her in this. I knowing she had grief and sorrow enough already, was unwilling to give it a new addition, so consented to it. O but this was a dear-bought obedience to me afterward! as, if the Lord will, I shall give some account. And O that I could be a warning to ~~all~~, to beware of sinning against light and knowledge for the pleasure of any! for, though the obedience to parents be a great duty, commanded in the fifth command, yet to obey them when their commands are contrary to the Lord's is not allowable.

But, to return to the thing itself; when I came back to the family, I found every thing in it as I left them; and, if there was any change, it was to the worse; and what effect this had on me I shall show you.

In the first place, I found the Lord sensibly departed from me in duties; and still my conscience harped on this, it is because you have sinned against clear light. In the next place, I was sorely plagued with sleeping at prayer, and that continually; and that time I was not sleeping, I was ill employed in wandering upon the mountains of vanity, pursuing after my idols and predominant passions, which at this time I was extremely mastered with; but this was not all: there arose a terrible discontent and disquiet on my mind, so that nothing could be pleasant to me, I was of such a fretful disposition, though nothing of this was known by my outward carriage and deportment. I laboured to hide as much as possible, yet, in the mean time, it is impossible for me to conceive or to express what trouble I was under without intermission, when I thought on what correspondence there was betwixt my sin and punishment.

All sorts of spiritual diseases seized upon me at this time so that I was in great distress every way; for two years time, I truly think, I enjoyed not a quiet and peaceable day to an end; but, like a raging sea, was my demented mind never at rest. During this time, I must acknowledge the Lord's condescendency, in suffering me sometime

to pour out my complaint before him, with that word in my mouth, wo is me that I have dwelt in Meshech, and sojourned in the tents of Kedar. I cannot but observe, that scarce a sabbath passed over my head but I experienced some token of the Lord's love to my soul, either in putting arguments in my mouth to plead with him, or in promising me deliverance from both my external and internal plagues, from that word, Psal. lxvi. 19, 20. But though it was thus with me on the Lord's day, yet through the week it was like a dead beast, which bred in me a great longing for the sabbath-day, so that I would have begun on Monday, and counted how long it was to sabbath; and O how glad was I when it drew near! I often wished for two sabbaths in the week, they were so sweet and pleasant to me, both in public, private, and secret; so that I could have been content never to have returned to the world and worldly company again. Then I compared myself to an apprentice, who is put from his father's house, but once a week he got the liberty to pay him a visit: and O how sweet would that time be to him, considering the hard labour and toil he had through the week, which breeds in him an unwillingness to return again.

About this time there were some sermons preached in the Canongate-kirk on the week days, by Mr William Mitchel, from Rom. vi. 12. 'Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.' These sermons were suitable every way to my present case, and great delight had I in hearing of them. He observed many things from the words, but especially these two I remember: First, That, as sin had a reigning and domineering power over all, so this power was in some measure broken in believers, so that it shall not reign there as formerly. Where he came to an use of trial, whose subjects we were; whether or not sin was reigning, or if it was dethroned and Christ enthroned. Where he made use of these expressions, is it possible that there can be a revolution in a kingdom, one king dethroned and another enthroned, and the subjects know nothing of it? No, surely it cannot be so quietly done. This put me to a stand what to think, I would fain have thought that Christ had gotten a throne in my heart, and yet sin was strong and powerful in me, that I wist not what to do.

On the back of this, he came with a large and free offer to captive sinners, which my very heart and soul went out after; no news could been more acceptable to me than this

this was ; this was a day of power on my soul, when I got leave to act faith, ' that sin should not have dominion over me,' from that word, Rom. vi. 14.

2dly, He observed, " That, as sin's dominion was broken in believers, so sin, as an usurper, was always labouring to bring its former power in their souls again ; yet, notwithstanding all its attempts, it should never overcome them altogether, and that because the infinite power of God was engaged for them ; for nothing else could preserve the spark of grace in the soul." Where he brought a very lively similitude ; " as if, suppose one saw a spark of fire in the midst of the ocean, they would say, surely it will be a wonder if that spark be preserved in the ocean ; but, would it not be a greater wonder if that spark should dry up all the ocean?" He told us, " It was a wonder that it was preserved in the midst of such an ocean of corruption, and yet it was a greater wonder that the spark of grace would one day or other dry up all those oceans of corruptions whatsoever."

O how earnestly did I long for that day wherein my corruptions would be dried up ! He continued a great while on this subject, in which time I had a great delight in hearing of them ; but what my carriage and deportment was on the back of them I would be ashamed to let know. The time of the sacrament's being given in Edinburgh drew near ; the thoughts of which bred many doubts in my mind what to do, knowing that I was not in a communion frame and disposition.

At this time, Mr John Moncrief was on these words some sabbaths before the communion, Rev. xxii. 17. " And the Spirit and the Bride saith, come ; and let him that heareth say, come ; and let him that is athirst, come ; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." In which sermon he drew up a contract betwixt Christ and his bride, believers, with the terms thereof ; to which terms, if my heart deceive me not, I have heartily consented ; but yet there remained such a multitude of sins and iniquity in my bosom, consulting and contriving vanity and vexation, so that this mixed my wine with water, and held me in perpetual confusion, as ever any poor creature was trysted with.

On the Thursday before the sacrament, I was in the College kirk-yard a while before sermon began ; which place hath been a sweet retiring place to me many times. I remember one morning as I was going into it, being frost and very cold, I was something unwilling to bear the cold,

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thinking to return back : then that meditation came in my mind. It was a colder night when our Lord Jesus Christ swate drops of blood for you in the garden ; and will you not endure some small trouble to the body, for to seek him ? This was a sweet meditation to me : I being in this place, there was something that lay very weighty on me, such as, the sense of my own case, considering how long and how great a distance there had been between the Lord and my soul with respect to what sometime I enjoyed. He seems to be both angry and silent. I get not the return of my prayer ; though I cry to thee against my spiritual enemies, yet they remain strong and lively. There was another thing was very grievous to me, the sense of the case of this poor land, and the inhabitants thereof. O what marks of the Lord's anger and displeasure are there among us ! such as judicial hardness of heart, want of love and sympathy towards the Lord's people in distress. All are seeking their own things, and few the things of another ; there is no mourning for sin either personal, or more solemn and national, the breach of covenant and solemn vows made between God and the land ; it being as a contract drawn up by our godly ancestors, to be for God and his interests, against all errors and ungodliness, both in doctrine and manners, of whatsoever sort : So they in their own name, and in the name of their posterity, subscribed this solemn league and covenant ; and God in an eminent manner gave his spirit to witness with them, how well he was pleased with it.

This was our glory above other nations ; but a malignant, ungodly, prelatick party, disdain this covenant, because it would not agree with their ungodly projects and designs. Therefore, they took and burnt it, not secretly, but openly and avowedly, they gave it to the hangman to throw it in the fire, in the sight of the sun, not being ashamed of what they did. Yea, they rather were ashamed to own a covenant-relation to God. Now, hath not the Lord gotten great provocation to be angry with us ? Hath he not been already contending with us by fire ! in sending a burning to that place where it was burnt, to remember us of the ashes of a burnt covenant ; and yet, who is laying it to heart ? And not only this, but alas ! who is mourning for the blood of the saints, which was shed in this city ? their blood ran like water about the Cross and Grate-market, when our unjust rulers and magistrates, with consent of the clergy, thought no more of the lives of the Lord's people than they had been dogs or swine.

It is very observable, how the Lord set a mark of his displeasure upon one of the chief murderers of his people, who is by name Sir George M'Kenzie, the king's Advocate at that time. After the revolution he left the land, and went to England, where a little before his death he took a bleeding, so that there was not an open in his body, but what gushed out of blood. Physicians being called to know the cause of it, could give no natural reason for it at all, but, that it was the hand of God on him for the blood that he had shed in his own land; and yet, who is laying the blood-guiltiness to heart?

Under the sense of these things, I desire to be humbled as being guilty with the rest of the land; insomuch as I have not mourned for these sins in good earnest; I am a partaker in their sins, and so am plagued with their judgments. I desire also to mourn over my secret sins, my relation sins, O my atheism, my unbelief, my untender walk, my grieving the spirit of God many times! Oh my carnal affections are set on unreasonable objects, ungrateful creature that I am! Oh that I am thought of by the people of God, when I am nothing but a filthy wretch in God's account! alas that I am so useless and fruitless in my day and generation! I am but a tree in the vineyard that is bearing burs, and no more. Of what use am I to the church, either abroad or at home, or to my relations, or the family where I dwell? though sin much abounds there, which makes me many times lament, and cry with David, *Psal.* 120. Oh for my hypocrisy in the matters of religion, and for my secret iniquity, which sticks so fast to me, that I call them not the spots of God's children! I am a sink of iniquity, an habitation of God's enemies; there is never a sinful thought comes in my way, but what gets present entertainment from me; Christ's motions can get no hearing in my heart, there is such a den of devils within me. Oh these temptations that suit my inclinations, do me much mischief at all times. These things lay very weighty on me through the day; as also for the sins of my near relations, and of the real godly, whose ways are not answerable to their profession; and likewise the abounding sins, among all ranks of people, high and low, rich and poor. I cannot but tell it to the glory and goodness of the Lord that I got leave to pour out my mind on all those accounts; and I besought the Lord, that he would pour out a spirit of mourning on all of us, from the king to the beggar, as a token that he would not leave the land; and that he

would

ould come and captivate my heart at this communion himself. This day being spent, I found a great many doubts and questions in my mind, what to do.

On Saturday, our sermon was very sweet to me; but especially Mr. Witheart's, on these words, 'My love, give me thy heart.' He prest us to this duty, and gave many comfortable motives to persuade us. But there was one great difficulty remained within me; there were many objections made and answered, but that which most perplexed me was never mentioned; and it was this, but alas! I have given my heart away to other things, and now, do what I would, I cannot get it again to give Christ. But this was answered by none. Notwithstanding I resolved at this sermon, that there should no sleep come into my eyes, nor slumber to my eye-lids, till I have found out an habitation in my heart to the Lord. But at night, when I began to think of spending a night with the Lord, flesh and blood began to reason thus with me: "What needs all this toil to the body? it will but disenable you for the work of the ensuing day." I having some disorder in my head, found myself very ready to comply with the motion. But then when I thought how solemnly I had promised, I besought the Lord, if he was calling me to this duty, to give strength both to body and mind, and remove indispositions: which in some measure I found to my experience. A glorious night this was to me, the which I never enjoyed the like before, it being wholly spent in prayer. And, when I had spent three or four hours of it in prayer, I do not think there was one petition put up for myself; the case of others lay so heavy on me, and was so brought to my hand, and I can say it (to the glory of God be it spoken) that, beside the churches in general, both abroad and at home, there was not a godly person, that I had the least knowledge of, but what lay upon my heart this night, so that I got leave to make language of them before the Lord: as also I was made to plead for this city in particular, that he might be present in a signal manner at this solemnity. Yea, there was not a congregation in this city, but what have put arguments in my mouth to plead for his presence to it, so that many souls might be converted, and others convinced.

On the back of this I got liberty and freedom to bewail and lament my sad case before the Lord, and to supplicate for a renovation in my mind, that I might be

no more the old person I was before. In which place, I take heaven and earth to witness, with all the glorified saints and angels, that this night I devote myself to the Lord, and I am content with all the terms of the covenant of grace; and that, upon condition I get strength to perform those duties required, strength to mortify corruptions, and subdue iniquities; then shall my heart be a habitation for the Lord, where nothing shall dwell with pleasure but himself.

O but this was a night to be kept in remembrance by me, when, as I was firmly persuaded that it was the spirit of the Lord that was supplicating by me; so I was persuaded the Lord would deny me none of those petitions, because they were the dictates of his own spirit; but that in his own time he would graciously answer me! O the joy and comfort that was on my heart! this night that word ran frequently with me, there wrestled a man with Jacob until the breaking of the day. And in the morning those three scriptures came in with light, life and refreshment to my soul, Psal. cxviii. 24. 'This is the day that the Lord hath made, come, let us rejoice and be glad.' There shall be cause of rejoicing in all the congregations of Edinburgh. This day there came a direct call to myself, from Matth. xxv. 'Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.' This being followed with a promise of my being established in the Lord's way, from that word, Psal. xcii. 13, 14. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God: they shall still bring forth fruit in old age, and they shall be fat and flourishing."

But, tho' I was thus feasted with these things, and in expectation to get more at his own table, yet was I no sooner entered the place of public worship, but as soon I got a messenger of Satan, a thorn in the flesh, to grapple with the sin that so easily beset me, began to struggle, and that so strongly, to such a degree, that I was like to be mastered with it, and to call in question what I had met with that night. Then did I think, that word belonged to me, 'Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.' I knew not what to think, nor what name to give myself. O my corrupt heart put me out of order for any duty, but more especially for the duty of communicating; which bred some thoughts on me not to communicate. This day Mr John Moncrief was on these words again, Rev. xxii. 17. A comfortable sermon it was, there being many large and free offers of Christ in it; but there was nothing that

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that I could apply to myself in it. O the distress I was in! When he came to fence the tables, his commission was very large; but I could not hear my name. So I continued in my resolution not to communicate. At length, when I thought he was done with his invitations, he said, I have another sort of folk to call yet, who is in my commission; and that is, nameless folk, that know not what name to give themselves; come ye to Christ with your nameless case, he will make language of it. Then was I persuaded that was a particular call to me, which I durst not sit, but come to the second table, where Mr William Wilhart served; where I made a new resignation of myself to the Lord; where I besought that he would exercise his kingly power over me, in putting all things out of my heart that were seeking his room, and would not consist with the spirit's dwelling in me; such as, my predominant, my idols, the right-hand and the right-eye of my affections; let them be cut off with the sacrificing knife of sanctification. This day I am a cage of unclean birds, but I am persuaded that thou canst make me clean. I am content to accept of Christ on the terms of the covenant of grace, on which covenant I build my hope of salvation, Christ being the Mediator thereof, by whose righteousness only I am to be saved, notwithstanding of my many corruptions and my indwelling sins; in whose name I promise to stand for God and his cause in my day and generation, come persecution or trials of whatsoever sort, rather than I deny those truths. I now profess, I will rather go to a gibbet or to a burning-stake to lay down my life for it. I also promise to stand for the Presbyterian government, because I believe it is the way and worship appointed in thy word. When they are in trouble, I desire to be in trouble with them, and to take my lot with them; but it is only in the strength of the Lord that I promise. O help day by day to mortify a body of sin and death, that I may have heart and sincerity in all that I do. That the glory of God may be my chief end in all my performances, is my earnest request, this day, in the sight of men and angels. Written and subscribed at Edinburgh, April 6th, 1701.

Elisabeth West.

ON the back of this communion, I cannot but say, that the impressions of what I had met with were
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sweet to me for some time; yea, I had a great pleasure in thinking, and also in telling to others, what God had done for my soul. Likewise those with whom I conferred these things to, told me, that this communion was to them as great a day of the Son of Man as for a great while they had experienced, which was very desirable tidings to me to hear tell of; but, as it seemed good to the Lord to put always a mixed cup in my hand, so it was at this time. But, as I was showing before, there remained a weight and discontentedness in my mind, on the account of that family where I dwelt; so that I never went to that duty but I besought the Lord to pity me in this respect, and in his own due time to relieve. Then did I resolve to leave this family, over the belly of all oppositions whatsoever, for I found that I could not stay in it with a good conscience; but this I forbear. There is a word in Psalm cxviii. 15. 'The voice of joy and rejoicing in the dwellings of the righteous.' So, by the rule of opposition, I found that sorrow, grief, and vexation, are in the dwellings of the wicked.

The day appointed that I was to go away drew near; and O what ease was that to my mind! I cannot express it; but my joy in this respect was soon at an end. But, that same night before I was to come away, I took the fever, and this detained me a while longer, which providence had a loud language to me; but what to make of it I knew not; only this, I saw the Lord's hand in detaining me in this place, and that for the punishment of my sins; especially that sin against light. During the time I was under this fever, my spirit was very low, and in great trouble, both in body and mind; and that because I found indwelling sin growing on my hand, though my body was very low. O the unknown, hidden, and secret abominations that lodged in my heart! they are both inexpressible and inconceivable for any to unfold.

It pleased the Lord I recovered this sickness, but with little health to my soul that I could discern; I saw no amendment on my frame and disposition of spirit.

Mr John Moncrief at this time choosed this place of scripture to preach on, Prov. xxx. 8. 'Remove far from me vanity and lies.' I thought no text could be more suitable to my present case. He had many sweet sermons on the vanity of the mind, which was the very language of my heart told to me. I bless the Lord for Sabbath-days; for on them I (for the most part) got ay some-thing

thing to keep in the life, otherwise I could not have been supported; but, what shall I say? His way with me is all wonders, so that I cannot express them. But, alas, alas, my sorrow and vexation began anew, when I entered among those that laughed at and made a sport of religion, and spoke despitefully of the Lord's servants, the ministers; this I could not bear; but it was the Lord that helped me. Many times the Lord's power appeared, in making me put to silence those who, for age, might have been my teachers, so that they had nothing to say. What a grief was this to me, that I was in such a family? I revealed my mind to some of the godly on this account; but little to my satisfaction: for they gainstood my leaving of this place, thinking I might be more useful in this family than in any others. This was like a dagger thrown at my heart.

However, I was firmly resolved to leave this place very shortly, never to return to dwell in it again. I had great clearness in this from the Lord, and was particularly confirmed in this by one of his servants in the Collegiate-kirk. On a day there, one of my comrades, who was in the same circumstances with myself, in a wicked family; we were lamenting our case to one another: and after this converse, we heard Mr Archibald Riddel, who preached on that subject, of the godly's being in wicked families, and what other duties were in being circumspcct among them. But, said he, after all, if ye cannot reform Babylon, come out of Babylon. This sermon was so suitable to our conference, that we could not but see the Lord in it. But, before I left this family, I must record a sad and lamentable providence that beset the three kingdoms on a sudden, which was the death of our gracious king William, whose name ought to be kept in everlasting remembrance by all the godly, but particularly by the inhabitants of Scotland.

He was a king endued with all manner of wit and prudence for the government of his kingdoms, both in time of war and peace; tho' indeed he was a prick and thorn in the eyes of the wicked; for, both in this life and at his death, they spoke with bitter indignation against him, tho' without a cause.

And, He was the king that delivered, or at least was the mean of our delivery, from the tyranny of Popery and Prelacy, two unsupportable burdens Scotland had long been under; but especially that of prelacy, which was a yoke that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

Two or three days before this lamentable news came, the general assembly were met, and Mr Thomas Wilkie preached at the opening of it, on these words, Exod. iii. Where Moses turned aside, to see that great wonder, 'the bush burning, and not consumed.' Where he held forth, "How that the Lord had preserved his church in 'all ages, tho' in the midst of a burning bush;" where he told us, "That in all appearance there was some 'fore trial Scotland was to meet with very shortly, 'which would kindle the bush in a flame, but yet God 'would preserve it from consuming." Now, how soon this prediction came to pass, let any judge; for this was on the Tuesday, and the news were confirmed on Thursday, being in March 1701. O the grief and sorrow that was on the hearts of all the godly! both ministers and people made great lamentation for him, fearing that this stroke was but the forerunner of others. For my own part, I cannot tell what effect it had on me; I was greatly afraid, lest in a short time there would have been a change of government, and all manner of evil would follow: for we truly thought that gospel-ordinances would not be continued with us. But the Lord in mercy prevented these our fears.

It cannot but be observed, that as there was much grief of heart among the Lord's people, so there was nothing but joy and rejoicing among the wicked and profane; and, for those of the prelatie party, they in flocks gathered on the streets, and with a merry countenance would ask at one another, Where shall we go and drink *Dirge* the dredgie? O as that grieved me at the heart, when I heard it! These men were big with expectation to be restored to their old posses again; but glory to God, their hopes were, like our fears, both disappointed. for the Lord gave us favour in the eyes of our queen, whose heart was inclined to continue our church-government as formerly.

The impressions of the said loss continued with me, so that, the more I thought on it, it affected me the more.

On the back of this, it pleased the Lord graciously to manifest himself to me at the sacrament of the Lord's supper in the College-kirk, where I must remark, it was a time of strong convictions, especially for my doing despite to the Spirit of God in former times; but particularly on April 1. 1699, which I have recorded in page 61. O as the sense of this sin lay on my heart! fearing, that because, if God had a lasting controversy with me,

I was made to wonder that he did not throw me down to the pit that very day, for my horrid iniquities.

On Saturday, Mr John Schaw preached on these words, Jer. iii. 22. 'Behold, we come unto thee, O thou art the Lord our God.' This was a wonderful sermon to me, and backed with the power of God on my soul; if I should set down what part of the sermon that effected me most, then must I set down the whole; I bless the Lord, that I heard it.

On the morrow, Mr John Moncrief was on these words, Ha. liii. 'And by his stripes we are healed.' This was good news to me, who was so defiled with sin. He spoke to these three things; First, the persons, We. 2dly, The medicine, stripes. 3dly, The effect, healed. He also held forth the sufferings of Christ in a wonderful manner; and God spoke by him, as I hope many within that house can witness, and set their seal to it.

I communicated at the second table, where Mr Archibald Riddel served, being the 12th of April 1702; where I took heaven and earth to witness, that it was a cure to my many diseases, a medicine for my sore plagues, both for multitude and aggravation. I cannot well tell what frame of spirit I was in, but I bless the Lord it was no worse; though alas! alas! it was not with me as in times past; I renewed my former engagements, in the strength of a Mediator, but in great darkness. At afternoon, Mr Riddel preached on these words, Deut. xxiv. 'Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen the Lord for your God.' To which I thought my heart said Amen; yet through the whole day I was under a cloud. On Monday, which was the last and greatest day of the feast to me, Mr William Wisheart was on Rom. 'That ye might be married to one husband, even unto Christ, that ye might bring forth much fruit unto God.'

In this sermon he made great and large offers of Christ to all, even to those who slighted him; where my heart was made willing and content to accept of him on gospel terms. He gave some marks, to know if they were married to Christ, they would be fruitful. All that I can remark from this communion is, that I am persuaded the Lord was with his servants, the ministers, for they were wonderfully helped to discharge their duty: as for any thing of light and love I got myself, it was like the sun shining in a winter day, blink up and blink down; I continued not long in a good frame, but in many various cases. The week following, there was an acquaintance of mine on his death-

bed, with whom I was somewhat concerned, on the consideration that his life was not so tender in the matters of God, but that it might render his death very uncomfortable: I desired, as I could, to take the case before the Lord, seeking mercy to his soul. On Wednesday, the night on which he died, I was there present, and, seeing him in a very lamentable condition, I thought it my duty to go to God for him once more, where indeed I got my communion-feast in a large degree; I no sooner entered the duty, when there was an open door granted me of access to the throne of grace, where I got my sore complaints poured out before the Lord, both for myself and others, and particularly for this poor man; where that word came on his account, 'I will come and heal him.' On which word I was made to hope, that the Lord would heal his soul.

A little after this, I began to stagger and misbelieve; then that word, 'Said I not unto thee, that if you would believe, you shall see the glory of God.' He departed this life about six in the morning. How it was with him I shall not determine; but this I know, that it fared well with me that night on his account; yea, for ordinary, it was never better with me, than when the case of others was my concern; which remembered me of a word of Mr Samuel Rutherford's; "Run errands for others, and you shall get something for your pains."

On the back of this, there was a communion at Ratho, where I was a witness, but not a partaker, by reason that at this time I was extremely carried away with the corruptions of my evil heart, so that I knew neither what to do, nor what method to take, for all means seemed to be ineffectual to me.

On Sabbath after sermon, I was like one not having altogether the right use of my reason, I was so sore distressed with the body of sin and death: I remained a good part of the night in the fields, but was no better; I spent the rest of the night in converse with some of my godly acquaintances, which rendered the time very pleasant and desirable to me. On the morrow, the Lord was graciously pleased to send me a word very seasonable to my case, by Mr George Andrew, from Psal. ci. 'I will sing of mercy and judgment; to thee, O God, I will sing.' Where he observed two things;

First, That it was the Lord's ordinary way with his people, to put a mixt cup in their hands, mercy and judgment; not all mercy, lest they should say, 'We shall never

be moved; nor all judgment, lest they should faint and give over.

2dly, He observed, that, whatever was the lot of the Lord's people, they would tune it over in a song, whether mercy or judgment; but some would not sing of judgment, that seems strange; but, for as strange as it seems, yet there are these four judgments wherein the people of God will see matter of a song:

1st, The judgment of corruption; at which I wondered.

2dly, The judgment of desertion.

3dly, Outward afflictions.

4thly, When Zion is in trouble.

He came over them all again, but I shall only mention two of them, which suited my case most.

First, The judgment of corruption. As to this he said, some might say, who would sing under this? which has cost us many salt tears, sighs, and groans; many weary hour, day and night, have we had with it, and yet to sing, how can we do it?

I will tell you these three things that may be matter of a song, even in this case:

1st, Your corruptions have humbled and laid you low; so that now you are become the habitation where the Lord will dwell; may not this make you sing merrily?

2dly, Your corruptions have sent you many errands to the throne of grace: and, is not this matter of a song?

3dly, Sing, and that because, ere-long, you shall be in that place where corruption dare not enter: have you not then great reason to sing in this case?

4thly, As for the judgment of desertion, you want not matter of a song, for these reasons: First, The Lord is thereby teaching you, that you cannot stand on your own feet; you are like a broken footed glass, that cannot stand without a support. May be, when you enjoyed the light of his countenance, you thought never to be moved; but now he hath hidden his face, and ye are troubled. 2dly, Sing, and that because this long desertion is but making way for a new manifestation, where ye shall get a new song put in your mouth, Psal. xl. where David was shewing how he was in deep mire, where was no standing; but what follows? he set my feet upon a rock, and put a new song in my mouth, praises to our God.

I must confess, this sermon was God's send to me; for which I desire to bless his holy name, and resolved not to neglect the duty of communicating the first occasion that offered.

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At this time I found no small difficulty in leaving the family which I mentioned before: but the Lord helped me to keep my resolutions, and oppose every thing to the contrary. I cannot but observe, that, while I was persuaded to stay, one day after another, that word seized on me, 'Wherefore do ye linger?' Which signified to me, that, if I linger any longer, I should be detained altogether; and it might be a long time ere I got such another opportunity. On this consideration, I left that family that same day; and that with much peace and satisfaction of mind accompanying me, a daintieth to me for many years before; and that word was very sweetly brought to my mind, "I was cast upon thy care from the womb even till now, and from my mother's belly thou hast been my guide."

The first communion I heard of, was at Linlithgow, where I and several others resorted; in which place I desired to make a surrender of myself to the Lord. I cannot express what frame I was in on Saturday and Sabbath morning; but it was very undesirable, I was so dull and dead-spirited. In this case I remained until the tables were fenced, and then I retired to the church-yard, where I got some liberty to tell my case to the Lord; and came to the second table, which was served by Mr Andrew Barclay. I thought he was directed to speak to my present case; where I got a new confirmation of my adoption; but that which was more particular, was in the afternoon; he being on these words, Acts viii. 39. 'And the Eunuch went on his way rejoicing.' Where he observed, 'That there is great joy and rejoicing following on the back of receiving Christ by faith.' He held forth this in several instances, and in the mean time my heart could have sealed the truth of these things. I thought he spoke the very language of my heart, and I wanted not some measure of joy in hearing this sermon; it was short, but very substantial, and the impressions of it remained with me for some time. On Monday, Mr Burnet preached on these words, 'Wherefore call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' Then Mr George Barclay preached on, 'Occupy till I come.' These sermons I was helped to hear with satisfaction, delight, and stayedness of mind; which was no small mercy, considering in what a wandering disposition I was for ordinances. I cannot say that I got what I expected, at this communion; yet I received ground to hope that the Lord was reserving more full discoveries of himself to me till some other occasion.

The sacrament was at Lasswade next Lord's day, where I resolved to be. I was there on the fast-day, but on Sabbath I was so indisposed in my body, that I kept my bed for some days: so I was deprived of this occasion, which was no small grief to me.

After I recovered this indisposition, the Lord was pleased to bestow on me another experience of his love and favour to my soul, in as large a measure and degree as ever any I received before; (but all his ways with me are mercy, love and wonder, never to be found out!) this being at the time when the sacrament was given in the West-kirk, and I being there lying about the pool's mouth, waiting when the angel would trouble the waters. I had some thoughts to communicate the first Sabbath, but by reason of my untender, unholy, lifeless, secure, and hardened case, I durst not approach his holy table, not having the graces of the spirit in exercise; for I saw, there was more required in a communicant than to be in a state of grace; those graces must be drawn forth in exercise. Sabbath, through the whole day, I was loaded with a spirit of discontent, altogether discouraged, and fretting at the Lord's way with me. I could hear nothing in the sermon, nor at the tables, that suited my condition; therefore I resolved to leave this kirk and go to some other, where I would hear my case better spoken to. Mr Ridgel being at this time on these words, 'Will he shew wonders to the dead?' I thought this was more suitable doctrine for me; yet I knew not what to do, or where to go, I was so troubled in my mind, thinking that God would appear against me in some terrible manner or other, (but in mercy he prevented my fears.) I continued still, till all the work was over; then was I like to one demented, and out of their wits; I retired to a secret place in the church-yard, where I seemed to be at the last gasp; I was like to faint and give over; I can endure no longer; duties are a burden to me, ordinances are a weariness to me, because I make no progress in the ways of the Lord; I can stay no longer. O I see nothing less will do my turn than a Trinity! O the need that I saw of a Mediator in all his offices! While I was thus distressed in my spirit, the Lord, who is always an helper to his people in the time of need, was pleased to look on me with an eye of pity; in which place I got my bands loosed, strength conveyed to me, which was like life from the dead; where I got leave to tell my very heart's complaint to the Lord, and to plead with him former experiences, that, for his name's sake, he had done for

for my soul, at former times, and at sundry occasions, in divers places; such as the Tron-church, the College-church, Lallwade, Preston-pans, and Largo, with other places, where I was made willing by a day of his power to accept of Christ in the terms of the covenant of grace; my reflection on these times was no small ground of hope that the Lord would yet do great things for me. O the great alteration I felt in my spirit in a sudden, so that I cannot express it! And, though I was not at the table where he uses to feast his people; yet I must acknowledge, 'he took me into his banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love;' when that word was borne in upon me, 'Though ye have lyen among pots, yet ye shall grow wings like doves.' This was a suitable and satisfying word to me, considering what pots of sin and corruption I was lying among. I got near access to the throne of grace not only for myself, but also for others; such as the churches abroad and at home, my Christian acquaintances, my comrades, my dear and near relations; for which time my soul desires to bless the Lord; and I take this as an evident token, that I am called to partake of the sacrament in this place next Lord's day.

This was a sweet night to me, which I desired to remember. On Monday, Mr John Williamson was on Psal. ciii. 'Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me.' I thought my very heart went out with this, saying, Song of praise. Then Mr James Hart preached on Isa. l. 10. He spoke to them that were in darkness, to trust in the Lord; and to them that were brought out of darkness, to improve it four ways; 1st. Be very thankful. 2dly, Pity others that are not so happily privileged. 3dly, Ply the throne of grace for the church and interest of Christ. 4thly, Make ready for trials of three sorts. 1. Desertion. 2. Temptation. 3. Affliction; all which I thought very applicable to me. After this, I happened to be in company with some, whose converse was wholly earthly. In this company I found no small skaith, when I found the spirit withdraw, and the sweet tastes of his goodness wear gradually away; then was I furnished with many convictions of my not improving the Lord's presence when I had it. *

I fell to drooping again, and was afraid that the Lord had withdrawn altogether, for my resisting his spirit, now being more guilty of this sin than I was; and it appeared to be a degree of the sin against the Holy Ghost: this was no small trouble to me.

On Wednesday afternoon, it being the time my comrades and I set apart for prayer; in which place I got a new discovery of the Lord's favour to my soul. I can tell it, to the praise of God, that we seldom met in this duty, but I got some experience of the love of God manifested to me.

On Thursday, being the fast day, I was in a very ill frame, nothing suitable to the duty of the day. The sermons had little effect on me, if it was not in the afternoon, where Mr William Crichton was on Amos vii. 2. I thought there was something of the Spirit of God witnessed with him, speaking of the pardon of sin.

On Friday, Mr Meldrum preached in the Tron kirk, on 2 Tim. iv. 8. 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' He observed, that a child of God might come to a distinct knowledge of their interest in Christ while here; and that there was nothing else here they could make sure to themselves, but this only.

As many a time he hath been God's messenger to me; so was he this day, where I found the breathings of the spirit of God on my soul. After I came home, I thought I got the Lord's presence in some measure again; where I besought he would make me ready for that solemn occasion, now near approaching; and that my graces might be put in exercise, so that I might be a bride for Christ.

On Saturday morning, I found the reflects of what I met with Sabbath last beginning to revive again, and the spirit of the Lord quickening me: where I was enabled to cry for these petitions, which at that time lay weighty on me to have granted.

Such as a loathsome sight of sin: an holy and spiritual walk, at all times, in all places, and in whatsoever circumstances; and that I might be an useful Christian in my day and generation. This was a time more than ordinary to me, where I got leave to act faith, that the Lord would grant me these requests; that word being borne in upon me, to-morrow the Lord will come down, and do wonders among you. This made me go joyfully to the house of prayer, waiting for the out-makings of these promises. This day Mr William Mitchel was on these words, 'Woman why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?' John xx. 15. Where he observed, First, That the soul, that was seeking Christ, would never give over till it find him. adly, That Christ's absence was such a trouble to a believer, that all other things in the world could not content them, till they found him; no, neither angels nor ministers.

To

To this doctrine I could set my seal; for what is all the world, without him? give me Christ and nothing, rather than a world without him. But that which was more particular to me, was Mr John Anderson, on covenanting, from Ezek. xvi. 8. 'I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou became mine.' Where he observed, that it was the privilege of believers to be in a covenant-relation with God.

He spoke to the parties covenanting, and to the terms of both parties; at which time, and in what place, I called all in heaven and earth to witnesses, that I was made willing and content with this bargain. This sermon was so desirable to me, that I cannot forbear to set down some of the terms, both on God's part and the believer's. As to the First, That God in his covenant promised to make over himself, and all that is his, for the supplying of the needs and necessities of his. 2dly, That he would take up his abode, and dwell with them. 3dly, That he would defend them from their enemies. There were several other things he had on this head which my memory hath slipped.

The terms on the believer's part were, First, To receive Christ, as Lord. 2dly, To renounce all other lovers. 3dly, Resignation of all to him, and subjection to his holy will for evermore. O what power I found come along with these things, so that I thought every sentence had more weight and life than another! I thought I would never weary of this sweet subject, which was like marrow to the bones. After the public worship was over, I began to lay these things seriously to heart, and anew to enter covenant with the Trinity of heaven. O that I may have it to say with David, 'Thou hast made with me an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure!' that I may not be calling it in question, as I have done formerly. O seal me by thy word and spirit, and I shall seal the covenant with my heart and soul, and subscribe it with my hand: and let this peace be a standing witness betwixt thee and me, that I am thine, and thou art mine for ever. Then were the terms of the covenant laid out in broad bands before me. I shall set down what then I engaged and solemnly vowed before the Lord, with lifted up hands, on my bended knees.

"I here desire to receive Christ into my heart, in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and king. O Lord, when I stand in need of any of them, deny me not assistance, that when I am in the dark anent my duty, ei-

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"ther concerning my soul, or things of this world, that,
 "on my application to thee, thou wilt direct me what to
 "do: O say Amen to this according to thy promise:
 "Psal. l. 15. Thou also knowest, that, by reason of a
 "body of sin and death, I am daily polluting myself; so
 "that I soon lose my confidence in approaching the throne
 "of grace. O let thy righteousness be in stead for me;
 "intercede for me there, that I may get free access, e-
 "very day, as often as need requires. Lord, say Amen
 "to this also, according to that word, Eph. ii. 13. Thou
 "also knowest, that I have many enemies, from without
 "and from within: the devil to tempt me, the world to
 "allure me, pleasures to captivate me in a wrong way,
 "a corrupted nature inclined to every thing that is evil:
 "O come then as a king, fight against all these my ene-
 "mies; for they are not only my enemies, but they are
 "thine also; for they all agree in one, to destroy thy
 "work of grace, which thou hast planted in my soul! O
 "Lord, whenever any of these assault me, because I am
 "weak, I have no more ado but make my recourse to
 "thee for help against them. And let thy good word be
 "made out to me, who commandest us to cast our burden
 "on the Lord, and thou wilt sustain us. This day,
 "O Lord, I desire to put a bill of divorcement in the
 "hands of all my strange lovers, and say with Ephraim,
 "What have I any more ado with idols?" Thou only
 "knowest what a nest of unclean creatures I have with-
 "in me; since thou first took a dealing with me, I never
 "wanted some idol or other, contending for Christ's
 "room most unreasonably: but I here promise, before
 "heaven this day, in thy strength, there shall never a-
 "nother get such room in my heart, but Christ only:
 "and, in token hereof, I give my affections to thy
 "keeping: let them never go out after any thing but
 "what shall be pleasing to thee. O but I find this one of
 "the hardest pieces of religion, to get the right hand
 "and the right eye of my affections plucked out: but
 "this I know, thou commandest nothing but thou hast
 "promised strength to perform. I here this day make a
 "solemn, voluntary, and whole surrender of myself to
 "thee, soul and body, with all the faculties and mem-
 "bers thereof; all that is mine, or ever shall be mine.
 "I devote to be for thee and thine. If, in providence,
 "thou shalt see it meet to bestow on me any of this
 "world's goods, it shall be at thy disposal, whenever
 "thou callest for it, either to support or supply any of

" thy needy members; or if to lay it down to bear a tes-
 " timony for thy truth and interest, all that is mine is
 " thine: and, for my ordinary walk, I dedicate the
 " tenth of all that I possess: have I much, or have I lit-
 " tle, this I desire to observe; and any other enjoyments
 " thou shalt be pleased to bestow on me, let me know, in
 " that state and station, how to lay out myself for thee
 " and thine. Lord, accept of this dedication, and give me
 " light in this matter that I run not into extremes, either
 " to the right hand, or to the left; and let me have that
 " part of the covenant made out to me, Psal. xxv. 14.
 " I here again, in the sight of heaven and earth, desire
 " to subject myself to Christ, to be content with what-
 " soever lot he shall be pleased to measure out to me
 " in this world, and, with Paul, to learn, in whatso-
 " ever state I am, therewith to be content. If, in thy
 " providence, thou tryest me with poverty, I am con-
 " tent; if with reproach for thy name's sake, I am con-
 " tent; though all the world should become my enemies
 " for thy name's sake, I am content to suffer persecution
 " and trials for thy interest, though it were to lie in a pri-
 " son or dungeon, to be scourged and tormented; I lay
 " my account with it, and am content to be brought to a
 " gibbet or stake to be burnt at, for to bear a testimony
 " to thy truth. I here this day, willingly take up the
 " cross to follow thee through all difficulties whatsoever,
 " without a grudge. My life is a sheet of blank paper,
 " fill it up with what thou pleasest. I am here this day
 " content to live as long as thou pleasest, to die when
 " thou thinkest convenient; thy will is my will. Now,
 " O Lord, thou seest I make fair promises: but in thy
 " sight I profess, I will never keep one of them, but on
 " condition thou put the same mind in me that was in
 " Christ Jesus, to have a suffering spirit, and thy pre-
 " sence to be with me. I commit myself to thy keeping;
 " if ever thou bring a trial to Scotland, Lord, never suf-
 " fer me to turn my back upon thy persecuted way: be-
 " the hazard what it will, keep me from sinful compli-
 " ance in any manner of way. I am content to take up my
 " cross, and follow thee; but not in my own strength, for
 " without thee I can do nothing. O Lord, grant this
 " unto me, that this communion pass not over with as
 " little fruit and success as others have done; but, from
 " this day, let there be seen a real change on my conver-
 " sation; whereas before it was foolish, carnal and earth-
 " ly; now let me be holy, spiritual, and heavenly, that
 " I may

I may endeavour, as near as possible, to attain to perfection. O that I may never sin deliberately any more. Now, O Lord, all that I desire from thee, as to things temporal, is, that thou wouldst give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; let me neither have poverty nor riches, but food convenient for me, without being burdensome to any; and that thou wouldst seek me out a being in this world, that may be most for thy glory and my good, whether out of service or in service; only let me be a dedicated servant to thee all the days of my life."

I dare not but acknowledge that the Spirit of the Lord enabled me to put up these petitions to the Father in the name of the Son; and I got great faith to believe I was accepted, and that he would come down and work wonders amongst us, and that he would do for me above what either I could ask or crave. Meantime I was thus banqueting in the house of love. O but the case of others lay weighted on me! I got leave to put up these requests for them, on whose account I refused to take a nay lay; but especially for the church, which was in the furnace of persecution. I thought I could have suspended my communion to them, but that I knew there was enough in God for them and me both. I got leave to plead for the overthrow of their enemies, the Turk and Antichrist, with that proud tyrant in France, and all that were lending in their power to fight against the Lord. Our own mother church in Scotland lay very near my heart at this time, that the Lord would be a wall of fire about us, to preserve us in time of common calamity; so that we may never want pure ordinances in it, without the mixture of popery or prelacy, or any other error whatsoever: whatever thou do with us in a way of judgment and mercy, let it have a tendency to make us holy people to thyself.

While I was thus supplicating for my Christian acquaintances and relations, the case of my mother (who at this time, I thought, was drawing near to the grave) lay very weighty on me, that her peace might be secured with Christ before a dying hour; on whose account that word came with power, 'because I live, she shall live also.'

This night was so very remarkable, that I could not but record it, it being a long time since I enjoyed the like before; and was persuaded that the Lord would not only answer my request, but would do more for me than either I could ask or think.

On Sabbath morning I came to the place to get the feast of heaven to this covenant-transaction, and communicated at the first table, which was served by Mr Thomas Paterson, who preached on John i. 16.; where he held forth a full Christ to the empty soul. I cannot but say, the Lord was very gracious to me at this table; but yet I found a great fear on me that I would never keep my resolutions. Through this day I got not that which I was expecting, but was helped to believe that I would get it ere the work was ended.

On Sabbath night I was informed that Mr Meldrum was to preach on Monday; this was no small satisfaction to me, on the consideration what a blessed instrument the Lord had been pleased to make him many times to me. meantime I was thus comforting myself, I was checked for it, thinking what is this I am doing, expecting any thing from the creature? It is but justice, though his sermon be blasted to me for so doing; but I bless the Lord that my fears of this nature were mercifully prevented; for the last day of the feast was the greatest day to me, a day indeed never to be forgotten by me, but to be kept in everlasting remembrance. In the morning I got leave to believe that the Lord would grant me all that I was seeking, and was confirmed of this by two scriptures, 1 Cor. iv. 10. 'And God granted him all that he requested.' Isa. lxiv. 4. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that fear him.' In the hope of this, I can express to none my joy. Then I came to the place of public worship, where Mr William Wishart was on the words, Rev. iii. 11. 'Hold fast what thou hast, let no man take thy crown.' Where he exhorted us to hold fast in many particulars, but especially what we have received at this communion; telling us, that it was more difficult to keep what we had got than it was to find it when lost, which, to my sad experience, I know full well. But, among other things, he exhorted us to hold fast the profession of the Presbyterian government, so that none of us should ever consent to the inbringing of prelacy again, which Scotland hath spued out; and shall we be like dogs to lick up our own vomit? where he pronounced a curse on that person that should in any manner of way help to rebuild Jericho. At this I was glad to hear him so faithful, there being great need of such doctrine at this time.

Now, I am in a strait how to record what followed in

the next sermon, there being something in it extraordinary to me, which was better felt than can be told, while Mr George Meldrum was on these words, Jer. l. 4. 'Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten;' this being so suitable to the text on Saturday, 'I entered into a covenant with you;' and so suitable to the work which the Lord had been helping me to, at the time of personal covenanting. So the very reading of this text spoke good things to me; and glory to God, I was not disappointed; for, of all the sermons ever I heard, this was beyond them all; though I have heard many sweet and comfortable sermons, and many glorious days did I enjoy under his ministry, he being the first minister that ever I heard preach Christ to me, so as to receive him; yet there was something in this sermon surpassing all the rest. I found a great deal of the spirit and power of God in this sermon, so that I knew not what was sweetest; for it was a time to me no less than the gate of heaven; he spoke of some marks of them that had truly covenanted, and how they should improve their covenant relation.

By which marks, I was persuaded that I had them in some measure; and my whole soul went out with great desire to have them more and more imprinted on my conversation.

He spoke so particularly to these things, that I could not but see the Spirit of God witnessing with him; and brought so upon my spirit, that I was put beyond all doubt, that I was one that had gotten acceptance, and was received into covenant with God himself, not for any righteousness of my own, but the righteousness of Christ the Mediator, and that this day was the sealing of the covenant of grace with me; those three all bearing jointly witness of the truth of it, 1st, His Spirit working by a day of his power. 2dly, My spirit was made willing and content to the terms, by this day of power. 3dly, His servant, as the external instrument, was made to confirm this by his sermon. So all these three agreed in one in this matter; but what my impressions of this were, I cannot put in write; for it was beyond all expression: which gives me ground to say, with David, 'He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten.'

Then there was a song of praise and joy put in my mouth; Praise, praise and glory to the great God, who hath done such great things for poor me, who by nature de-

* served hell and wrath ; but the rich mercies of his free
 * grace hath exalted me ; at this I call heaven and earth,
 * angels and saints, and every thing that hath a being, to
 * praise. O that I may be so helped to praise him in my
 * conversation, that it may evidence my thankfulness in
 * my after-life, though it should be filled up with trials
 * and difficulties of whatever sort or nature ; that I may
 * still carry as one in covenant with the Lord, being well
 * content with his way with me. Again I recommended
 * myself to the Lord, and I am well content with the or-
 * der of the covenant of grace ; and here I bind myself to
 * the Lord's way, and to the profession of the presbyte-
 * rian government ; be the hazard what it will, I shall stand
 * by and contend for it, with all my might and power, on
 * condition I get strength and wisdom to do it ; for of my-
 * self I can do nothing. And in witness hereof, I have sub-
 * scribed this with my hand, the 10th of August 1701.

Elizabeth West.

NEXT sermon, Mr George Andrew was on Song ii.
 3. ' I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
 and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' Where he answered
 many cases of conscience, that poor things might be per-
 plexed with ; and that this apple-tree would protect them
 from all storms whatsoever.

After the public worship was over, I began to enquire
 what the Lord was speaking to us by the tempestuous
 storms we had met with : and was answered, that there-
 by the Lord was learning us the A, B, C, of afflictions,
 and that by this lesson to prepare for greater.

There was a word borne in on me to this purpose, Jer. xii.
 5. ' If you have run with the footmen, and they have wea-
 ried you : how will you contend with horses ?' If so little a
 trial be troublesome to you, what will ye do when ye
 may be forced to run from mountain to mountain, forty
 or fifty miles through frost and snow, to seek the word of
 the Lord and not find it ?

On Sabbath morning I was in a very dead and confused
 frame of spirit, and remained so till Mr Moncrief came
 out with these words, Psal. xxiv. ' Lift up your heads, O
 ye gates ; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors ; that
 the king of glory may come in.' At which my heart be-
 gan to melt, for my soul was longing for that sweet guest to
 take up an habitation in my heart, and to purge me of e-
 very thing that hindered it,

I went

I went to the first table, where the Lord was pleased to shine on me with that word, 'Ye shall be mine in that day, when I make up my jewels;' in which place I took heaven and earth to witness, that I was solemnly devoted to serve the Lord.

This was a sweet time to me, and I believe it was so with a great many more; for the glory of the Lord filled the house, and wrought a desirable frame on the spirits of men and women, so that it could not be hid. O that I could praise, and never forget that day! for I was persuaded there were wonders wrought among them.

On Monday morning, I must acknowledge, the Lord was very gracious to me in secret, but more particularly when I was in prayer with one of my comrades; but, when I came to the public worship, I met with a new difficulty; Mr George Hamilton being on these words, Psal. lxxvii. 36. 37. "Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their lips, and lied to him with their tongues, for they were not stedfast in his covenant." Where he, for the most part, insisted on this, that many people, for all their fair shew and pretence to covenant with God, yet they were but dealing treacherously, and lying to him with their tongues.

O the distress this doctrine put me into! so that I could not hear the Lord's servant deliver his message, but with discontent; and I fretted the whole time, I was so discouraged and heartless.

Whatever effect this sermon had upon others, I know not: but for me, it dang me both stupid and senseless, so that I wist not what to think to say, for I thought, if I have been dealing treacherously and deceitfully, I am out of hope ever to deal honestly. The thoughts of this put me out of case for duties of any sort; and I continued in this discontented frame for some time.

Sabbath next, I was in Dalkeith-kirk, where Mr Campbell was on Psal. cx. 3. 'They shall be a willing people in a day of my power.' Where he spoke of some marks of those whom he had called by a day of his power; which marks I durst not but lay claim to. This revived my hopes a little, but continued not long; for through this week I was in such an ill case, that I could scarce breathe after the Lord: and any duty I performed, was but mere form: for, tho' my body was present, my heart was to seek.

In this weary frame, there arose so great fears on my mind, which perplexed me exceedingly, and put me in a great consternation; my fears were, that the Lord would,

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in justice, suffer me to prove a scandal to religion: and that I would apostatize from his way: with several other fears, which I cannot name. This vexed me to a degree, and was no small trouble, though none in the world knew of it.

But on Saturday night (a night never to be forgotten by me) as I was at prayer, I could compare myself to nothing but like one drowning in the water: when I thought I was over head and ears, and that there was no help; even then, at that very instant, did the tender-hearted and gracious Lord take pity on me, (for he is always a help in time of need) and darted in these two scriptures with light, life and power; 'I will be your God and guide even unto death. I will guide you by my counsel, and afterwards bring you to glory.' Now, who can think or conceive what a change this wrought on me, in the twinkling of an eye? My dull, lifeless and frozen heart was in a moment turned into a flame of love and admiration, that the Lord should be so condescending to such an unworthy creature, this reviving being so suitable to my present case; as also, it was solving me as to that doubt which troubled me, that I never got a promise of glory. The consideration of these things put me in a lively frame for duty; but which is more remarkable, how the Lord confirmed this to me, not only in secret, but in public worship.

To-morrow, being Sabbath, the impression of what I met with was very refreshing to me; but, when I came to the place of worship, Mr John Millar, a young man, preached on Psal. xxxi. 24. 'Be of good courage, and he will strengthen your hearts, all ye that hope in the Lord.' He observed, that it was often the case of God's own people to be troubled with many disquietments and perplexing fears; such as, fears of their interest, fears of their acceptance, fears of their not walking up to their engagements, fears of their want in the world, fears of their not persevering in religion. He endeavoured to solve these fears, by bringing suitable scriptures to the purpose; and I was helped to make application of them all.

Then spake he to the fear that I was so much perplexed about. O, say some, I'll never win through this world, and keep my garments clean, but I shall be a reproach to religion. But you need not fear that; for he hath said, 'I will be your God and guide, even unto death; I will guide you by my counsel, and afterwards bring you to glory.' At this I was struck with admiration, that the Lord had sent

his

his servant to confirm these two scriptures, in the same way and manner I received them. This was a blessed sermon to me, through all the parts of it, and I desire to bless the Lord for this day, it being among the greatest days ever I felt, for confirmation and hope of glory, it being the 30th of August. The impressions of this kept up my heart for some time, and I was helped to lay about the Lord's hand for counsel and direction in some temporal concerns; and though, for the time, I got no distinct answer, yet there were some remarkable scriptures borne in on my mind, on which I was helped to act faith, and believe that counsel should be given me when need required.

I abode in this place for several weeks, and was much refreshed in hearing Mr Campbell on the Sabbaths I was there. After this I was for some short time at Innerkeithing; but what the Lord's way with me in that place was, I cannot distinctly record; only this, Mr Charters being minister there, his ministry was also satisfying to me, and I got leave to pour out my requests, though not with such observation as at other times.

For the sensible communications of his Spirit were but some times my allowance; for at this time the Lord was frequently speaking to me by his word. There was some things lay very heavy on me concerning some outward providences. I shall set down some of the scriptures that abode with me when I began to ponder on these things, Psal. xxxii. 9. 'I will guide thee with mine eye.' Psal. xci. 11. 'He shall give his angels charge concerning you, to keep you in all your ways.' Isa. liv. 5. 'For thy maker is thy husband, (the Lord of hosts is his name.)' Psal. cxxi. 3. 'The Lord shall preserve thy outgoing and thy incoming, from this time forth and for evermore.' But it well becomes me to speak of the loving-kindness of the Lord; for his ways are as so many wonders, that the Lord should have been so condescending as to screen and guard me about with the promises, in order to help me to bear the trial which he was hasting to bring on; but his goodness would not send me out to the stormy seas without some suitable provisions for the trial I was to meet with. I have sometimes compared myself to one going a long journey in the winter season, it being dark and gloomy, the way also being full of mines, sinks, and snares, all which are very dangerous; but this I must observe, before I came at these places, I got either sun or moon light to discover them; so that I might never be surprised at,

not

nor intangled in them, so as to despair of a recovery. And was not this great favour conferred upon me?

I returned to Edinburgh the 15th of November 1702, where I met with a severe trial; and though it be not convenient to set down the particular circumstances of it, yet it was sharp, heavy and likely to be continued, it being from the hand of a near and dear relation. My trouble in this concern was very great, and that which increased my sorrow was, that there was one who was nearly concerned in this trial (whose grief and vexation was to me as if it had been my own) and in this affliction they could scarce be supported, but was like to sink with grief and sorrow; and it was like to prove a death stroke. O but this was a sore and double trial to me! especially one Sabbath-day, we being both exceedingly grieved, not knowing what to think of this dispensation. In the mean time, these three thoughts were suggested to me;

First, How often have ye grieved the Spirit of God, and yet have been little troubled for it? When he is (for ends known to himself) grieving your spirit, how do you grieve and fret?

2dly, That this present trial was not singular; for many of the Lord's people have been so trysted, as both scripture and experience will prove; as Samuel and David.

3dly, That word ran in my mind, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, why should not I drink it?' There is not one drop in your cup, but what the hand of a kind Father hath mixed; and why should ye not bear it patiently?

My reflections on these things were very satisfying; where I subjected myself to the Lord's will and pleasure; let him wind up his trial to the highest pitch, I shall desire to be silent because the Lord hath done it.

On the morrow after, it pleased the Lord to prevent our greatest fears, and the afflictions was not removed, yet was somewhat lessened, which was no small mercy.

Now, as for the Lord's way with me in 1703, I shall (if the Lord will) in some measure declare, there being some things in it remarkable. At this time, there was more than an ordinary concern on my spirit, towards the interest of Christ: this being a time wherein there were great fears among the godly, lest we should again be entangled in our late bondage of Prelacy: this sent me many errands to the throne of grace, that the Lord might prevent it from all the corruptions and inventions of these

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men. This lay near my heart, both in private and secret.

I must record, that, having one night met with several of my comrades for prayer, (as it was our ordinary once a week) there arose a very puzzling question among us, and it was this, What was the difference betwixt the Presbytery and Prelacy? since they be so like other, in that they worship one God, have one bible, and preach one doctrine; wherein do they differ?

To this question I found myself very unfit to answer, and yet could not think to let it pass without a reply, (though not at that time) lest it should be said, we were professing a religion that we could not defend when it was opposed. I came home, and brought this before the Lord, and I desired that he would give me light in this matter; and that very same night I must confess, I got something suggested to me, wherein these two differed: but this remained so dark and confused, that I could not make language of it, nor know how to put it in order; but I was helped in the way of duty to rely upon the Lord, that he would discover to me more clearly wherein these two differ in doctrine and practice: but what I am to say, it was the Lord telling me in these two things, First, It was in the way of commanded duties I received them. 2dly, Every one of them was backed with his own words, who cannot lie; and indeed this matter was no small case of conscience to me, before I was resolved in it. There was a word brought to my mind, 'Contend for the faith once delivered to the saints;' from which the Lord taught me two lessons, 1st, That as the Lord had handed down a faith to his people, so it was their duty to be so settled, confirmed, and established in it, that they may be able to contend for it when it is called in question. 2dly, That in all ages of the church there have always been some to contradict and oppose the faith, otherwise there had been no need of contending for it. This night, the Lord was graciously pleased to clear up many things to me, which before were dark and confused; and, they being so remarkable, I must set them down. There were some things in religion which I saw that every one should contend for, and some things which every one should contend against; 1st, The Lord's own people should contend for Christ's rights and prerogatives, that none lay a claim to them but himself. 2dly, That all the ordinances, worship, and government of his house be according to his own appointment, and that it should be kept free from the invention

tions of men mixed in with it. Now, I began to compare this with prelatical government, and saw how it was so corrupt with the inventions of men in their worship and government, and that they had taken the titles of Christ, and given them to men, which is quite contrary to the principles of presbyterian government, and ought to be contended against, in these six particulars.

First. They have invented a new head to the church, (the king) whereas Christ is the only King and head of the church, Psal. ii. 6. 'I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion.' 2dly, They invented new officers in the church, (Lord Bishops) contrary to Christ's appointment, Luke xxii. 25, 26. Christ is the only Lord Bishop himself, all others are but overseers. 3dly, They have invented a new sort of worshipping God by a set form of prayer, which is no where warranted, but rather contradicted, Rom. viii. 26. 'Sighs and groans which cannot be uttered.' 4thly, They have invented the observations of some superstitious days, as an ordinance in the church, such as Yule-day, &c. which have no warrant from the word. 5thly, They have invented a new doctrine, viz. That morality is the whole duty of man; so much have they set forth in the book called, 'The whole duty of man,' where in there is nothing but morality pressed, without so much as making mention of Christ's righteousness, or employing him any manner of way. This is not the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, so ought to be contended against. 6thly, They are avowed enemies to the covenanted work of reformation in Scotland, especially the Solemn League and Covenant, it having God's warrant on it, therefore they disclaimed it, and burnt it most shamefully, and put many to death for owning it. Now, these were the things I saw to be the difference between presbytery and prelacy. And I desire to bless the Lord for what light he gave me in these things.

At this time began the fears of the Lord's peoples interest, lest prelacy should be again established in Scotland; for indeed the prelatic party were boasting mightily, that they would be restored to their own posts; and they were not ashamed to profess, that if ever they got power, we had but the sample of episcopacy before, but now they would have pure church of England. The hearing of those things put sometimes a new edge on my spirit, to pray against these unhappy designs. Particularly one night, which I cannot but remember, it being the 5th of March 1703. I being in a very dead and lifeless case

could neither be concerned for my own condition, nor yet for the case of Zion. I went to an exercise of Mr Hog's about the evening, but could hear nothing to profit; which made me resolve to leave the exercise before it was done; yet this I durst not do, though I resolved it; and, glory to God, I did it not; for, before the exercise was ended, I found a wonderful change, life was sent me from heaven, and I was persuaded that it was the Spirit of God working with the Spirit; for it brought to my mind, and put me in order to perform a duty which I had no thought of before, and it was this, to spend the night in wrestling with God, concerning the present state of the church of Scotland; and that the Lord would prevent the in-bringing of prelacy again. I resolved, that, if the Lord would preserve this good motion, I would spend this night alone in prayer; but providence so ordered it, that there was a comrade of mine, who offered to join with me in this duty, before ever I had made known to her my design; the which I willingly consented to, and thought there was something in this more than ordinary.

This night we spent together, and a glorious night it was; I am sure, the Lord was with us in a more than ordinary manner; and a great measure of the spirit of mourning and supplication was poured out upon us; by which I was firmly persuaded, that prelacy should not be Scotland's trial at this time. I have sometimes read the 74th Psalm, but never with such light as this night, when we were helped to plead the same petitions, every verse having more weight than another, and every way suitable to the present circumstances.

Next day the general assembly sat down, and a most faithful sermon was delivered by Mr David Williamson, Psal. cii. 13. 'God will arise, and have mercy on Zion.' This sermon was refreshful to many, and no less to me than to any, it being so suitable to the purpose for which we had spent the last night. From this sermon I cannot but remark, that it is the Lord's ordinary way with me, that when he is calling me to any duty by the secret motions of his Spirit, then for the most part he sends out a word by his servants in the ordinances to confirm it; and this is an unquestionable proof that it is no delusion. As to the particulars in this sermon, they were both so many and so good, that I would but spoil them, to set them down; only the whole subject he was upon, was, what a great plague prelacy had been to Zion, the church of Scotland; and what a mercy it was to be delivered from it; where

he warned all to beware of it. At this my heart was glad. In and about this time, I cannot but observe the Lord's way with me, both inwardly and outwardly; there arose great and strong impressions on my mind, which I never felt before; and it was this fear of reproach, for what, or by whom, I knew not, but still could not get these words out of my mind, 'Report, say they, and we will report; come let us smite him with the tongue.' This was somewhat disquieting to me, fearing that I should be left to do something that would reproach religion; for which I besought the Lord to prevent my fears.

I revealed my mind to some of my comrades, what they thought of this? whose answer was, that they knew none that had so long escaped the scourge of the tongue as I had done; therefore, that I might lay my account, that when it came, it would be both sharp and severe; which indeed came to pass, though not for a considerable time after this. At this time there was something concerning my outward condition, for which I besought the Lord for counsel and direction; it being in order to go to a family in station of a servant, to which I found a great unwillingness, for several reasons; but the Lord cleared it up from his word, that this was of and from himself; and therefore I durst not reject it, though contrary to my inclination. But to return to that which lay nearest my heart of any thing in the world, and that was concerning the church in this land.

About the beginning of May the parliament sat down, and then there was ground of fear indeed; for the episcopal party was busied about nothing so much, as in writing petitions to the queen, to grant them a toleration to be installed in kirks again; and also, in the parliament they had a great many friends, ready to do them all the service they could: and it was thought by many it would be granted to them.

Now, it is known to none in this world how these things affected my heart with fear, and I thought it my duty to supplicate the Lord against it. And one day, being in prayer, beseeching God that this toleration might not have success: then that word came, 'See I have accepted you in this thing;' where I was helped to act faith, that it should not be granted. At this time it pleased the Lord to open the mouths of our ministers to speak for the truth and interests of Christ's church, and declare their great aversion at this toleration; but particularly, there was a sermon preached against it by Mr Meldrum, on these words,

'Pray

'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.' This being before the parliament, he had a faithful and free sermon, testifying what hurt a toleration to the episcopal clergy would do to the church of Scotland; and used several weighty arguments to shew the danger of it, and what sad consequences it would produce.

Notwithstanding all the ministers could say, yet there was a malignant party in parliament that would have it granted; but what say I? God was not wanting to give a new demonstration of his love and care for the church of Scotland.

One day, the parliament being met, it was concluded by many, that the toleration would pass that day; but God, in his providence, sent such confusion among them, that the like was never heard of; for they were like mad men, to stick and gore one another with drawn swords, which made them dismisse without doing any thing. Then the noise ran, that the toleration was past; at the hearing of which, I thought to have fallen down dead in the place where I was; for it struck me to the heart: then that word came in my mind, when Moss held up his hands, then Israel prevailed; but when his hands hang down, Amalek prevailed. So that I thought, that it was our hanging down our heads in duties, that hath provoked the Lord to let this Amalek prevail. A little after this, I heard it was not past, but was to be done next meeting. This was no small comfort, that there was a night and a day left to wrestle with God concerning it. O but the Lord was gracious to me! when I was in prayer, that word ran much in my mind, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth; and that he would turn all the counsels of the wicked to nothing; where I was helped to believe on the power of God, who can turn hearts when he pleaseth. Next time the parliament met, there was no small trouble on my mind what the day would produce; but, glory to God, who prevented our fears, and our enemies expectations; for the Lord wonderfully turned the hearts of enemies to be friends. That day this matter was ended: so that there was no more word of a toleration to be heard of at this time; for which cause my heart desires to bless the Lord.

Short while after this, I was for some time in the East Country, where the Lord dealt very graciously with my soul, and made over much of himself to me in that sweet duty of meditation. I wanted not Christian converse with some, which was refreshful to me; and, as for the ordinances,

they were both sweet, satisfying and suitable: all which helped me to bear up under some small bits of trial I had to undergo in that place. Notwithstanding of the goodness of God to my soul, yet I found a body of sin and death strongly prevailing against me.

On Sabbath our minister, Mr George Turnbull, had chosen that text, Psal. xix. 12. 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults; and let them not have dominion over me.' When I heard these words read, I thought my heart cried out within me, that this is the very language and desire of my soul; and I must acknowledge, that I heard God's mind spoken from it to me.

A little after this, the sacrament was to be given in this place; and that day that it was intimate, the lecture was in Matthew, where the servants are sent out to hire labourers to the vineyard. He told us, "That this was his errand the day, to see if any would be hired to be Christ's servants, and to work his work." At this my strong and vehement desires went out to be engaged to be one of those who would do service to him in my generation. 'O to have my ears bored to the post of his house, never to run away from him any more!' At this time I had very heavy impressions of in-dwelling sin: and the nearer this solemn ordinance approached, I was the more discouraged; so that I resolved not to go to the Lord's table at that time, but thought to do this so secretly, that none should know it. But, glory to God, that would not suffer me to keep my resolutions; for he prevented me with his loving-kindness.

On the fast day I was helped in some measure to these duties called for; yet remained in doubt what to do. But,

On Friday afternoon, when I was at secret prayer, the Lord was pleased graciously to shine on me with that word, 'I will make all my glory pass before you;' then I was persuaded that the Lord was calling me to this solemn ordinance. O but the impressions of this were sweet and continued that night.

On Saturday morning I got a great and wonderful discovery of the love of God to me, while I was reading a sermon of Mr Flavel's, on Prov. viii. 31. I thought at the reading of this, my very heart was ravished out of me, at the love of God in Christ to me; when I could read no longer, but fell a wondering in a rapture of admiration, and went to prayer, but cannot tell in what frame I was:

for I could do nothing but ask questions about the love of God to lost men; but, what these questions were is not recordable, for I fear I fell a raving.

O but this was a blessed day to me, both in secret and public! where Mr William Moncrief was on these words, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good.' And to this I may say, and that my soul knows full well.

After sermons, I retired to a corner in the fields, where I got leave to pour out my mind before the Lord, both for myself and others, and for the church of God; where that word came seasonably to me, 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight; and he shall be like a refiner's fire and fuller's soap, to purge the sons of Levi.' I must confess that this scripture was made very applicable to all these things I was seeking, and that the Lord would meet with me in his temple, where I should again 'taste and see that God is good;' and, praise to Jehovah. I was not disappointed, for that Sabbath was a most satisfying day to me, which neither tongue nor pen can express. I was at the first table, where I got my heart's desires poured out to the Lord; and I thought it most observable, that these things my soul was going out after, and desiring, were sweetly enlarged on by the minister of the place.

This was a feast-day to me indeed, where my soul was satisfied with the fatness of his house. O the sweet thoughts and meditations that were borne in on my mind concerning this feast-day! I saw that, as there were many things in this solemn ordinance that resembled a feast, so I saw also some things in it that far excelled all the feasts that ever were among men, in these respects:

First, Feasts among equals; such as they themselves are that make them; but, who would make a feast to the horses, dogs, and swine? This would be an unequal company to feast with.

O then, doth not this feast that the great God hath made excel all others? For there was no equality between him and us; we were (by sin) more vile in his sight than dogs and swine are to us, so as to make companions of them.

Secondly, At feasts, men eat but for themselves, but are not allowed to send dishes from the table to their poor friends or needy relations.

Herein then doth this feast excel all others; for our heartsome and liberal Lord and Master-feaster doth not only say, Eat, O friends; but also, send portions of what

ye will to your poor friends and Christian acquaintances, that are not so well provided as ye. 'Concerning my sons and daughters command ye me.'

3dly, When men make feasts, they are at expences to get beasts and fowls prepared for it; but, who saw ever a dear and only child presented in a dish to eat of? Or, did ever any present themselves to feast their company invited? But, in this excellent feast, the great God presents his only and beloved Son to feed his guests on; and Christ he presents himself, that we may eat his flesh, and drink his blood by faith, to nourish our souls and heal our distempers. O wonderful and unparalleled love!

4thly, When men make feasts to their friends, they do not marry all that they invite, neither do they give them all crowns and kingdoms that come to the feast; but, in this excellent and glorious feast, there is a marriage proposed (to those that come by faith) Matth. xxii. with the King of glory; and all those that marry this King may be sure of crowns and kingdoms that last for evermore. I cannot tell what sweet thoughts these things afforded me, and I also took great delight in discoursing of them to others.

On Sabbath next, our minister was on these words, Psal. xlvii. 3. 'God is known in her palaces for a refuge.' When he spoke of the glory and beauty that were to be found in the presence of the king; to which, I thought, I could set my seal.

After sermon, I retired to the fields to pour out my complaint before the Lord for several things that lay heavy on me; and, particularly, that the Lord would be with me, and bless me, in that family where I was going; and that I might get a capacity for what was to be called for from my hand, I being to leave this place and to go to a family near Edinburgh. O how graciously did the Lord communicate himself to me in this respect! where I saw that where I was going I was to have a mixed cup put in my hand, mercy and judgment. I also saw that in this place I was to have accomplished a long deferred promise; O but this was a refreshing day to me! The Lord was pleased to make sure to me bread and water, food and raiment convenient. This meditation was occasioned by seeing a flock of sheep; it was cast in my mind that the master of those sheep would never suffer them to want, so long as he could get to give them; so the Lord returned this to my meditation, that, being one of his pasture, he would never suffer me to want food and raiment convenient; but I was

to remember to be kind and sympathizing with his poor flock, in whatever station I was in, and not to be forgetful to entertain them; and this was borne in on my mind by many strong arguments.

I dare not but say, that the sense of his goodness remained on my spirit for a considerable time; which helped me to go on cheerfully in the way of the Lord; and was helped to commend it to others. After this, I left this place in November; and I bless the Lord that ever I was in that place of the country.

When I came to my new habitation at the Inch, I found favour among those with whom I lived, which I reckoned no small mercy, considering I always reckoned myself a poor, sottish, simple creature! I never thought I could do any thing like another body. I many times thought (and it is a truth) that, if the Lord had not bestowed some measure of his grace on me, I (as to other things) would have been as contemptible a creature as lives, good for nothing.

The Lord continued his favour and loving-kindness towards me, and many sweet communications of his love I received, and I thought that, if ever I got victory over corruptions, and the sins that so easily beset me, it was at this time; but it was not so, and to my grief I may speak it; for these days I enjoyed were but like a short summer-season, which made way for a long, a cold, a dark, a stormy winter, which very shortly came upon me severely: but, out of his grace's fulness, he gave me some cordials, to support me before it came on; and indeed they had all enough ado with it, are all was done.

I cannot forbear to record a providence that I met with: about the middle of December, there was a particular business which I was intrusted with, which thing was like to prove very bad and ill; and, I having a great hand in it, it became exceeding vexing to me, though none knew of it. I being but a stranger among them, thought, that either they might think me unfaithful, or careless about what I ought to be concerned in; and many other fears came in my mind, such as, religion would be ill spoken of; which sent me frequently to the throne of grace, that I might be helped to order my affairs with discretion; but while I was in the midst of my fears, these words came, 'Be careful for nothing, but by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God: I will perfect what concerns you.' And accordingly it was; for my fears were mercifully

fully prevented, which gives me ground to say, 'He is the God that performs all things for me.'

As for the Lord's way with me in the year 1704, I shall, as the Lord enables me, declare. The first day the Lord was very gracious to my soul; and brought many sweet thoughts to my mind, with respect to the circumstance of the day, which is known to be a day of asking nothing, and giving of gifts.

Then were these three questions suggested to me.

First, What have you been seeking to your new-year's gift?

Secondly, What have you gotten to your new-year's gift?

Thirdly, What have you given back?

For answer to those questions, I thought, if my heart do not deceive me, that all that I was seeking was nearer in conformity to himself, a more holy and circumspect walk; and that I might be useful in my generation, for his glory, and his people's good. 'What is thy request, and it shall be given thee?' In which place I desired to give myself to the Lord, soul and body, to be disposed of by him as he pleased; and to give up with idols and idols, that my heart might be wholly his.

These things were sweet and pleasant to me, when I reflected on them afterwards, which made me cheertful in whatever I was doing. O but how unfaithfully did I improve all these mercies, by an unholy, unfaithful, and sluggish frame and disposition! I anew began to turn after strange lovers, and suffer my heart to wander on the mountains of vanity; idols entered into my affections, tho' I had solemnly sworn the contrary, that I would have no more ado with them.

I wholly neglected these two noble duties of watching, and fighting against these sins that so easily beset me: thus did I requite the Lord, so foolish and unwise was I.

Then did my heart's plagues grow upon my hand: I got a new distemper to grapple with; a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet me severely; but fools for their sins and their iniquities are afflicted. O the molestation I was in! I was tossed from duty to duty, crying, that it might depart from me; but had no success, it remained and increased day by day. I found two parties warring together within me: the one party was for putting away all these horrid iniquities; but this was a very faint-hearted party, and was soon put to the worse, ere ever it was well resolved; but I found another party in me, that was well

content to entertain with pleasure those unholy and foolish suggestions; and this party was the strongest by far, for it always got place. The thoughts of these put me in a great disorder, and tormented me continually: and many times was I upbraided, both by my own conscience, and from the scripture, that I was not following the Lord with all my heart, but feignedly: for which cause, I sent up many bitter sighs and groans, that it might please the Lord to pity me: that I might not be any more molested with this temptation: and that he might keep me from being a snare to any: for I saw it was one of the devices of Satan, not only to make the wicked snares to the Lord's people, but even to make the godly snares to one another. For this I besought the Lord often: but still my confusions continued and increased, neither could I understand the language of it; but went from duty to duty, mourning and lamenting, with this heavy burden on my back, which was like to sink my spirits, fearing the Lord had left me.

Yet, in the midst of these confusions, I cannot but remark, that the Lord was now and then giving me some tokens of his favour, poor, unworthy and unholy as I was: sometimes in public ordinances, sometimes in secret, and other times when in converse with the godly: but more particularly, upon the 19th of March, being Sabbath, which was one of the most stormy days ever I saw, for snow, frost, and boisterous winds: yet there was a sweet summer day of the gospel, when I desire to believe many frozen hearts were thawed and melted in that place, of which I was one. And O that I may never forget what that day I felt on my soul! The minister was one Mr John Scot of Carlisle, a stranger to us, but a messenger of Christ, sent to Liberton-kirk with sweet tidings: that day his text was, John xii. 26. 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' O how my heart and desire went out, as in a flame, to be one of Christ's servants and followers! I thought, every sentence he spoke, my heart consented to it, this being the thing I was longing for, to follow Christ in all his imitable perfections.

After I came home, I thought I got leave, as I had reason, to bless his holy name, for such a glorious day as this was: but alas! how short while did this frame continue? 'It was but like a morning cloud, and early dew, it soon passed away.' Darkness again seized on me; the ills of my heart, and my predominant never ceased to molest me strongly,

strongly, and not in an ordinary manner. O how like was my case to a winter-day! For sometimes in the dead day of winter the sun will shine, and have some heat, so that it will melt the snow, and thaw the frozen ice, (it being as really the sun as in the midst of summer), but how long does it continue? But very short while, then freeze and hardens again, darkness comes on; and so it was with me. Therefore there is another thing, which I cannot forbear to remark, with respect to the Lord's dealing with me in diverse ways and manners. About fourteen days after this, there was a servant in the family that fell sick of a fever; and it was much borne in on me, that it was death dealing with her. I besought the Lord on her account, but durst not seek her recovery. In the meantime, I was made to believe, that none other in the family should receive hurt of this nature but herself. Through the week she continued very ill; and on Thursday, about ten at night, I being in the next room to that where the sick person was, being troubled in my body through the day, I cast myself on the bed, as it were to rest me, a little before I went to duty; but, in a moment's time the candle that was in the room kindles the hangings, and immediately it flies up in a flame; which probably might have done great scath, if providentially one had not come to the door. I got up like one distracted, and flew to it with my hands, and burnt them desperately; but, glory to God it was presently put out, and no scath done, but a little piece of the hanging burnt; all the hurt I got it myself. Now, though this was over, it was but begun with me, being in great torment, both in body and mind; my hands were in that degree of pain, that I thought, I was quite laid by for any kind of duty whatsoever; and my mind was in a great rack, thinking, that the fright might have been a mean of the sick person's death; and then, how could I free myself of it? In this distress case, I went to the Lord, and told my mind, as he enabled me, both for the sick person, and for myself; and, as he had been a physician many times to my soul, so now, that he might be the same to my body, I being in the extremity of pain. I must acknowledge, this was a sweet night to my soul; where I saw, in meditation, 'the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing under his wings,' to me in a particular manner. O what have I to count for! for the love of Christ hath been more displayed to me, than to other thousands; and yet to my shame I may say, there is none in the world improved it so ill as I do.

Then I began to inquire, what the language of this dispensation was? and what I should learn from it? To which I got three answers: 1st, I saw, that God had an holy and permissive hand in it, and that to reprove me for the flame of passion I had been in some days before; so that the flame reproves another, to teach me more meekness when offence is given me: I also saw his holy hand in preventing, that it came to no more height; as likewise, he disappointed my fears about the poor woman, for next day she got a cool, and there was hope of her recovery; but in two or three days she relapsed and died. 2dly, I saw Satan's malicious hand in it, who always goes about sowing mischief. It would have been a good turn done to him, if that one professing religion had been the instrument of burning an house. O then, how would the way of God have been spoken against! 3dly, I saw my own careless hand in it, in not being aware where I set the candle; as also in my lying down to sleep, when I should have been at prayer. Many and sweet were the thoughts and meditations I had that night on these things, which supported me under my troubles that were on my body.

Some days after, when the woman removed, and was a corpse in the house, I was under a great damp of spirit, and retired a while to the fields, to bemoan my case before the Lord; where I had strong and vehement desires to be away, and could have wished myself to have been the next corpse; and that because I saw sin continually prevailing against me, and that not in an ordinary manner, I dishonoured God, and am useless in my generation.

I also saw, that there was a trial begun on my spirit, which was the forerunner of some heavy dispensation to me, if death did not prevent it; for I thought I was a monster of iniquity, and, would it not be for the glory of God, to remove such an one out of the world? As for the Lord's mind to me in this particular, all remained dark and dubious; so that this increased my trouble the more. Notwithstanding of my disordered case, I communicated at Dalkeith about the beginning of May. I was greatly in the dark, yet I saw that it was my duty to communicate, looking only to the righteousness of another for my acceptance. My temptations continued, and any little blink that I got was when I was in converse and joined in prayer with some of my intimate comrades.

On

On Monday I got a very sore onset from my wicked heart, which let me to prayer, a little before I left this place; where I got leave to pour out my troubled mind before him, though in great distress. This night, after I came home, there was a child in the family, whom I loved dearly, fell sick; which proved a very strong and dangerous fever, so that nothing but death was expected: I was very much concerned for the child, and besought the Lord on his account. But more particularly, one day he was very weighty on my spirit; and, though this was but a short while, yet it was a very sweet while, where I besought the Lord for these things, his life submissively, his salvation, and my own sanctification peremptorily. All those I got leave to plead, and to believe my request would be granted, from that sweet scripture-promise, 'I have heard thee in an acceptable time; and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee.' The same day he grew worse, and very weak; so that they came in to see his breath go out. When I saw him in this weak posture, I was in a great consternation: what to make of the promises: so left the rest, and went alone, never expecting to see him again in life; however, it pleased the Lord in his own time, to disappoint our fears, and to recover him; which was a token that, as the Lord had heard me in this my request, so he would in other things, though long delayed; but the Lord, who is a God of wisdom, dealt in various ways with me; he one day lifts me up, and another day casts me down. My temptation grew on my hand, my distractions grew in a dreadful manner, so that I became a horror to myself; for to none could I make myself known, and all that I could do was, as frequently as possible, to retire and bemoan my sad case to the Lord himself, still seeking light as to this; but no answer that I could at the time understand; then did atheism and unbelief haunt me from place to place, but more especially, one Sabbath day, I was most troubled with it.

About this time the sacrament was given at Libberton, and I had some thoughts that the Lord would manifest himself to me there: for communion-times, sometime a day, have been glorious days to me. I could take the Lord to witness that it was himself alone I was seeking, holiness in heart and life, and to be useful in my generation, to have no will but his for my rule: I saw myself vile and lost, a den of devils, tho' secret ones, and no help but in the Mediator. On these considerations, I durst not omit the duty of communicating; I went to the second table

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where I was no sooner set, but there one of the greatest temptations and difficulties presented me, which I neither can nor will record. This put me quite out of order for that solemn work; so that I could neither think nor speak, but was filled with discouragements, and discontent, thinking the Lord did not regard me, seeing those things I was so crying and praying against were so increasing.

On the back of this communion I thought to have lost my wits with oppression that was on my spirit; I wist not what to do, my bowels within me were troubled; I was in sore distress of mind; I thought that all the promises for my sanctification were so visibly contradicted, that there was no reconciling of them; and, as for that black devil of atheism, it haunted me, like a ghost, from place to place, and put me on the rack: which made me oftentimes cry out, and bemoan the day I came into the world; and many bitter sighs and groans came from the bottom of my heart, which were the greatest part of my prayers: for I could not make language of my distemper, it was so very singular: I could not compare myself to nothing so like as one in the rage of a high fever. I lost all my spiritual senses: I had no stomach for spiritual duties: I had no strength to oppose the enemy: I neither saw nor heard: I spoke and raved much nonsense: so then I concluded, that death would be the upshot of my soul.

I continued many days in this distress condition, which none in the world knew of, so could not sympathize with me: I was just like a poor infant, cast out in the open fields, and no eye to pity or help, and as little could I do for myself. In the midst of this disquieted condition, I was, for the most part, getting scripture-promises to encourage me that an out-gate was coming: but, alas! unbelief swallowed up all the comforts, and left me in distress. There was a particular day, I being very distressed, walking up and down the house; and about my ordinary affairs, that word much haunted me, 'It is the time of Jacob's trouble,' but he shall be delivered out of it: and as I was musing on it, for it came very sweetly to me, that word followeth, 'He hath said it, and will he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and will he not bring it to pass?' This I was made to believe should be accomplished in due time. There was another very remarkable promise given me on Sabbath-morning, when I was at secret prayer, and very distressed: then was the Lord pleased, both to give me a look and a word, which melted and composed my drooping spirit: 'I will heal your backslidings, I will love you freely,' O how

sweet was this to me! I gripped to it as greedily as ever a drowning man to a rope cast to him for his safety: this was the thing I was seeking, for I was a backslider both in heart and practice. It was also a very refreshful day to me in public, where we had a stranger minister, on these words, 'O love the Lord, ye his saints,' where he spoke of God's love to his people, and that his people should in gratitude love him again. My very heart went out with what was said, for I saw it my duty in a particular manner: but all this was nothing to what I met with. After sermons were over, when I came home, I retired to the fields, where the Lord himself preached a sermon of love to my soul, both affectionately, convincingly and distinctly: so that I was made both to see and hear the Lord's voice as to these particulars: 1st, What he hath done for my soul: and how many signal tokens of his love he hath bestowed on me, which many of his own dear children did not experience in such a measure. 2dly, How ungrateful I had proved in mismanaging all these, and had given my love undeservedly to other thing. 3dly, That he was yet willing to give me new proofs of his love, for all that I had done. Then the 16th chapter of Ezekiel was presented to me, from the beginning to the end, which was my very picture drawn; for there was not one verse, but was made application of to me, as many times it had been before. O but this was a sweet place to me! I having got such a lively discovery of the love of God in Christ to poor unworthy me. O then as I longed to be altogether with him, where there would be no more parting, and where a body of sin and death would trouble me no more! For I found the motions and strong evils of a corrupt nature continuing with me; no mastery could I get of this, meet with what I would. I cannot pass this without wondering at, and admiring the Lord's way with me: when I am under sad distempers of soul, and giving way to sinful thoughts and inclinations, then I think, surely the Lord will come against me in some terrible manner in judgment, for I cannot pass without some remarkable stroke; but, glory to his holy name, his thoughts are not as my thoughts, neither his ways my ways: for his way with me is wholly love, and not terror. Now did the Lord's candle shine for some short time on my tabernacle; I got leave to be sometimes exercising that sweet duty of meditation, but especially when in the fields. There was a word that ran much with me on all occasions, both in trouble, and when otherwise. 'O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest! There were several

several things in a winged fowl that I with my soul longed for.

First, Birds, it is their element to be above; O when will it be so with me! I am so frequently wallowing in the mire of earthly thoughts, that it is seldom, and for a wonder, that they are above. O that, when my soul is there, I had wings like a dove, to fly and stay above!

2dly, Birds, though it be their element to live above, yet they must of necessity come down to the earth for food to themselves and their young; yet, I observe, that they do not dwell there as the beasts do; for, having got what is necessary, they mount up again. O if it were so with me, who must have a lawful employment for food and raiment; yet, 'having these things, therewith to be content,' and not to dwell there, as the men of the world do, but to mount up and dwell where Christ is! 'O to have wings like a dove!'

3dly, Birds, they are soon startled at the appearance of a snare; so that, ere ye can come near them, they mount up with their wings, and fly away. O then, to be so wise as to shun all appearance of evil, and, at the apprehension of a snare, to mount up to that strong shelter, Jesus Christ, where the enemy of our salvation could not follow!

4thly, Birds are harmless creatures, do harm to none; we are called all to be harmless as doves, 'and to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man.'

But, passing this, there is one thing I forgot to remark in its own proper place, it being before this time, in and about the month of June last; I being under some damps of spirit, that Sabbath the sacrament was given at Lashwade; I went there only to hear, not designing to communicate. I was no sooner entered the kitchen door but that word ran much with me, Psal. lxxiii. 'Truly God is good to Israel. But, the word that was made most refreshful to me, was Mr James Hart on Cant. i. 4. 'The King hath brought me into his chamber; let us be glad.' Where he held forth that sweet fellowship Christ and believers have together; and what these chambers were he spoke sweetly to; and I was in a wonderful manner helped to make application, and durst not but acknowledge he had taken me into his chambers; and was helped to believe, what he had done he would yet do. O but this was a soul-refreshing sermon to me.

Through the whole summer I had my ups and my downs very frequently; and though there was much of the goodness of God discovered to me at many different times,

yet I was in sore distress with a very heavy body of sin and death, that I thought it was even inconsistent with the being of grace.

About the beginning of September, the sacrament was given at Leith. I had a great longing to be there, I was such a needy creature; and my very errand then was, that the Lord would make out some promises to me for my sanctification, anent a particular predominant which stuck fast by me, notwithstanding I had gotten many sweet promises, 'That I should get the victory; and that sin should not have dominion over me.' During the time of this communion, I could observe no out-gate of this, but rather worse; only I was much refreshed with a word Mr David Williamson had at the table, it suited my case so near: O! says he, may be there is some poor body here that cannot trust promises any longer! They must have something in hand to trade with; they will not be satisfied with bonds, but present payments. O but my heart cried, that is my name and surname. But this was not the Lord's time to do it to me; for the motions of sin grew stronger and stronger, so that I was like to give over believing it would be better. My trouble came to a very great height, though it was not observable to any; it was kept secret between the Lord and my soul, otherwise I had been a reproach to religion.

A little time after this I was in such an extreme trouble, that I could no longer get it borne within; but vent it must have, or then I must swalt, which I did with bitter cries and tears, in presence of some of the family, who pitied me very much; but none knew what the matter of my trouble was: for the providence of God so ordered it, that at this very time I took a sore throat, which proved very dangerous and painful, so they thought it was this that troubled me, and all sorts of medicines were got and applied for my health and recovery. But, O the terrible conflict that was on my spirit and mind, made all other pains no more to me than the point of a pin, in comparison of the other; only, I bless the Lord I had any trouble visible to complain of, to cover my invisible trouble, which was nameless. In this case I kept my bed for some days. The medicine that was applied was made effectual for my throat, but none could apply medicine for my inward sores; till he, whose medicine is like himself (the Lord Jesus Christ) sweet, easy, refreshful, and suitable; and that my soul knoweth right well.

On Sabbath I was very ill, so that night I could get no sleep, but tossed up and down, till my weary body fainted, and I was like to give over altogether; then came that sweet word with life and power, 'He from his temple heard my voice, to his ears came my cry, Psal. xviii. 6. And then was he pleased to favour me with more than an ordinary measure of his presence; and these two scriptures came along with it, Exod. xv. 26. 'I am the Lord that healeth thee,' Psal. ciii. 'Who pardoneth all thy sins, who healeth all thy diseases.' The impression of this was so sweet, that it put me to that refreshful duty of meditation on this sweet physician, Jesus; and wherein he excels all others. I have ground to say indeed, he sent his word, and healed me instrumentally: but himself is the all in all to me: then did I sensibly revive and recover. And the impressions of what I had met with, continued with me for a considerable time; and though the body of death, the old man continued in me, yet it did not reign and rage as formerly; which was a great mercy to me, known to none but myself. O that I were helped to glorify this condescending Lord, who so wonderfully surprised me with unexpected mercy!

Sometime after this, I fell under some damps again; and O but I find it difficult to believe in the dark, when I want sense in hand! I compare myself sometimes to Peter; when I am under the sense of the Lord's love, then I say, 'Lord bid me do what thou wilt, and I will do it; but when he bids me come to him on the waters of cross Providence and afflictions, then I begin to sink, and faith fails me.

I remember, upon the last Sabbath of December, I was very much cast down with the sense of in-dwelling corruption; and that day Mr Thomas Paterfon preached on these words, 'If any man thinketh himself something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth his own soul.' I was illerel came out, but indeed in the time of this sermon I grew worse and worse, and was tormented the time of hearing; and I longed to be at home, where I might get my heart poured out before the Lord; and when I came home, I retired to a secret place. I think, I was never in a greater distress in my life; my very bowels were troubled within me. O the sore oppression that was on my spirit! crying out, with bitter lamentation, "O thou that stillest thyself, the hearer of prayer; thy people call on thee as such; I myself once thought thee to be so to me. O why then am I thus oppressed with the delay of the answer of pray-

"er, so as I cannot understand it? If it be not thy will to answer this thing, then, why is my desire so strong after it? Have I not given thee my will, to be ordered according to thy will? Why then is my will and desire after what thou wilt not? O Lord, answer me in this one thing." But I was answered with silence. Thus did I end this old year in much grief and vexation.

In the beginning of the year 1705, the Lord was pleased to take off the vexing load and torment that I had on my spirit, so that I got duties gone about with much more calmness and quietness; yea he was pleased to shine on me, and I believed an out-gate was fast approaching: but still was made to cry for counsel and direction. Upon the 29th of January I got something like a sensible answer of this prayer, but whether in mercy or judgment, I know not: and this word came along with it, Zech. xiv. 6, 7. 'The day shall not be clear nor dark, but at even-tide it shall be dark:' so that I was, as before, entered again to grapple in the dark with this sore difficulty, yet the burden was taken off in a great measure; but, as one burden goes off, another is laid on, and that a very weighty one, the like of which I never met with before in less or more, and that was the reproach of tongues. Now was that word made out, which I marked in page 122. 'Report, say they, and we will report; come, let us smite him with the tongue.' There were some things in this trial that made it very bitter; First, It came from those that were professors of religion, for whom I had a very great esteem, and they deserved it; they also seemed to have the same respect for me; so that when these things were told me, I could not believe but that they were misreport, till the event made it appear: there were others also, that I cannot say so much on their behalf, that joined in this matter, to make my life uneasy with those in the family who reproached me, and this by whispering secretly, and that with severity, till at last it was made known unto me, to my grief and sorrow; I being altogether unacquainted with this way of entertainment. They marked my steps and words to find occasion against me. When I had gone to a secret place to pray, they would say it was for another end I went there; or if I had been making merry among them, they would have caught my words, and made me an object of their laughter behind my back. When this was made known to me, it proved a very smarting difficulty, and turned me very melancholy; so that I became heartless and dull, and desired as little as possible to be among company,

pany, but mourning and lamenting, saying, with David, 'Reproach hath broken my heart.' I took this case before the Lord, inquiring the cause of it; where I saw four reasons for it, First, 'To fulfil the word I was warned of some times ago. 2dly, To shew his sovereignty over me, as his creature; might he not do with me as he pleases? 3dly, To fill up my experience, and make me to sympathize and bear burden with those that are under this trial. 4thly, That his power might be seen in bringing me safely through this trial, as he had done through others.

'The Lord, at this time, was very gracious and condescending to me, and suffered me frequently to pour out my mind before him, and my complaint to him: and many sweet words I got to support me under this trial: considering that it was not a singular trial, for the Lord's people in all ages, have met with the like, both in the Old Testament, and in the New; and many of the godly, in my own day, have experienced it; but above all, the sweet Lord Jesus Christ, that Lamb of God, who was innocent and pure in his nature, who never sinned, yet he met with it: doth it not then become me to bear it patiently, and not to fret? But yet I found my proud heart could not away with it, neither could I any longer contain this within myself. There being a godly woman near to the place, with whom I had near correspondence, to her I told my complaint, who sympathized with me, and gave me her best advice. My life became very burdensome to me in this family; so I resolved to leave it. 'This place I left about the middle of May, and went to Jerviswood's family in Edinburgh; but providence so ordered it, that I was sent to the country, which was at Melistoun in the South; this was unexpected, but yet I willingly complied with it. As we were in the way going there, about the middle of the day I retired a little to the fields secretly, in which place the Lord gave me a blink, and a sweet promise, that he would be with me, and revive me as the corn, and as the dew upon Israel, and I should grow as the lilly, and send forth branches as Lebanon; this encouraged me in my journey there, where I was kindly received and entertained.

Now, as for the Lord's way with me in that place, I cannot but remark, some few days after I came there, the sacrament was given at Stichel: to which place I went, and on Saturday I met with very much sweetness in the sermons; for it was soul-comforting news I heard there. The first text was in Isaiah, on these words, 'I will pour water on the dry ground, and floods on the thirsty;' where the
very

very desire of my soul was spoken to, and I was made to apply it. The other text was, 'To this man will I look, who is of a broken and a contrite heart.' This was also a blessed sermon to me, where I thought the Lord was giving me an invitation to come to his blessed table to-morrow; and accordingly I went; and, blessed be God, he was not altogether a hiding God; but I got not what I would been at. We were very much exhorted to watchfulness, and to be on our guard, which was very sweet to me in hearing; but, I may say it, to my great shame, I had not so much delight in putting it in practice; for I soon let my heart wander on trifles of no value; so that I soon lost my good motions by my own neglect. But, what shall I say? My winter season was lengthened out in a great measure; sometimes a fair day and a warm blink; then presently a storm on the back of it from Satan, my own corruptions, and a wicked world; sometimes light breaks in so as I could read the love of God in Christ Jesus to my poor soul, and that there shall be an accomplishment of these long-delayed promises, to my comfort; but then, ere ever I was aware, darkness came and overshadowed all: so that I was a prey to unbelief and discouragement. Through this summer season I had several occasions of communions in that place, for which I bless the Lord: and also for our ordinary Sabbath-days sermons, which were very refreshing to me; yet I remained much in the dark.

There is another thing I cannot forbear to remark, concerning my outward affairs in this family; I must acknowledge every one was more civil to me and kind than another, except a French woman who was in the family; she was one that was visibly void of religion, as also her outward behaviour was most unfavourable and unbecoming; notwithstanding of this, I put the best construction upon her I could, because she was a stranger. This person seemed to have a very great esteem of me; and many times she would bless the Lord that ever she was in company with me: yet I never noticed any thing she said, knowing her to be a very great liar. But there was one day, being Sabbath-morning, she coming down stairs, singing to a little dog in her arms, at this I could not wink, but reprove her for so doing; at which she seemed to be displeased, and wist not what way to be avenged on me; but, to make amends for a fault, when we went to church, she was wholly employed in mocking the minister, and shooting out her finger in time of sermon; so that a great many in the Kirk took notice of her, and were mightily offended; and told

me,

ne, they wondered that such a person should be allowed to dwell in a family, where better things were expected. I considering that the heads of the family were from home, I took it upon me to reprove her sharply : on the back of this she turned the most outrageous, milchievous spirit against me, that she contrived the most horrid lies which could be invented : but the Lord of his goodness turned her malice to her own shame, and nowise to my hurt, but rather to the contrary ; yet this trial was somewhat weighty to me, considering this woman's reproachful tongue ; but I was helped up, first by the Lord, and then by all those among whom I dwelt, who, though they were strangers to me, yet their sympathy and concern was beyond expression.

I left this family in November, and returned back to the family out of which I came last at the Inch ; where I was received with very much kindness by all in it, and particularly by those who were my enemies before ; in which I saw much of the wisdom and wise conduct of the Almighty, who does all things well : and this my soul knows to its experience : there being many things in my charge in this family, that now were made more easy in many respects. O the deeps of his wisdom ! I saw in this providence, beyond what I can express : yet, even at this time, I wanted not a strong body of sin and death weighing me down, and making me cry out many times with bitterness of spirit, ' O that I had wings like a dove ! then would I fly away, and be at rest,' from a tempting devil, a corrupt heart, a wicked world, and the sin that does so easily beset me.

These inward griefs and vexations bred an unsupportable weight and burden on my spirit, which was like to sink me ; yet, in the midst of these pressures, I wanted not something now and then that was sweet and refreshing, which the world knew not of, that kept in the life of my soul. Frequently I got leave to pour out my heart before him in my secret retirements, that he would deliver my soul from this unknown trial ; in which place I got many sweet and comfortable promises, that it should be as I desired, from the 41st Psalm, which afforded many cordial meditations, that warmed my heart, when cold and frozen, and half-distracted with unbelief. O how sweet was the lifting up of his countenance to me when I was in trouble ! I saw so much joy, and felt so much delight in his presence that it is beyond expression. I can say, I never heard the most lively minister preach on what communion with God was, as now I felt it ; no, the one half was not told me of that

that intimacy and familiarity that is between Christ and believers, when they are admitted to communion and fellowship with him.

I had some reflections on the queen of Sheba's coming to king Solomon; the one half was not told her of what she felt. Where I was made to notice two things anent the queen of Sheba: First, Wherein every believer resembles the queen of Sheba. 2dly, Wherein every believer far differs from, and excels the queen of Sheba. There are these five or six things, wherein every believer resembles the queen of Sheba: 1st, When the queen of Sheba was in her own country, she was a mere stranger to king Solomon; he was only a hear-say king to her, by report; so every believer, so long as they are in their own country, or a natural state, are wholly strangers to this true king Solomon, Christ, Col. i. 21.

2dly, The queen of Sheba, when she heard the report of king Solomon; nothing would satisfy her, till she came and saw whether these things were so or not: so likewise, a soul that hath truly heard the report of Christ, nothing will satisfy them, till, with Nathaniel, they come and see the truth of these things.

3dly, The queen of Sheba, when she came to king Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart; so believers, when they come to king Christ, and have communion and fellowship with him; O how do they then unbosom their hearts, and pour out all their secret requests before him! They keep nothing back, either with respect to spiritual or temporal concerns. They can tell that to their God, which they cannot tell to their nearest and dearest relations in the world. They will be communing with their God, when the world neither sees them, nor hears them.

4thly, The queen of Sheba thought all her pains well rewarded, she did not grudge her cost she was at in coming to Solomon; so a believer, that hath truly come to Christ, will think all his pains and cost in religion well spent time. They count no cost for Christ; though they had been seeking him with the peril of their lives, and the spoiling of their goods, yet they will take it joyfully; and, with the apostle Paul, think all afflictions for Christ, but light afflictions.

5thly, When the queen of Sheba came to Solomon, she put strange questions to him, and was answered to satisfaction; so will the soul that hath real communion with Christ Jesus. This is very observable, that it is, not on-

at a time of their pouring out their hearts to him, but it is also a time of asking questions, which they get answered to their souls satisfaction. This was the practice of scripture-saints; Abraham, Gen. xv. 2. Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 29. Moses, Exod. xxxii. David, Psal. xliii. 9. It might be objected to the saints in all ages, when they are at the throne of grace, if there be not such questions as these put up by them; "O Lord, will ever I get such an idol" and predominant overcome and mortified, there is such a love in my heart to it? O how will I win through the world without being a reproach to religion, I have such an untender walk and conversation? O how will I get Christ to be the only beloved of my soul, there being so much love in my heart to other things? O how will I carry with respect to afflictions and reproaches cast on me, I have such a proud and passionate nature?" Now, to these, and the like questions, it doth please the Lord sometimes to give suitable and seasonable answers; such as, "I will put my fear in your heart, and ye shall never depart from me. My grace is sufficient for you. Sin shall not have dominion over you. I will guide you with my counsel while here, and afterwards bring you to glory." Those who know most of these things can best tell the truth of them.

6thly, When the queen of Sheba had been with Solomon, she could not conceal it, but speak to his praise, and what excellent things she had heard and seen in that court; so a believer that comes to that true king Solomon (king Christ) they neither will nor can conceal what royal and excellent things they have seen by the eye of faith. O, says David, 'Come, hear all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my soul.' The Samaritan woman tells those with whom she conversed, 'I have found a man that hath told me all that ever I did.' O but a believer rejoiceth much, and hath great delight in setting forth the praises of their noble King! Yea, they could wish all the world knew what they felt, if it would set them on to praise Christ.

Now, as there is something wherein every believer resembles the queen of Sheba, so there is other things wherein they very far excel and differ from the queen of Sheba.

First, When the queen of Sheba came to Solomon, she brought gifts and presents of great value, to make her the more acceptable to him. But, believers that come to King Jesus have no presents to bring, they come empty-handed;

handed, having nothing in them, or on them, to make them acceptable! they cry out, 'We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags.'

2dly, Though the queen of Sheba brought great gifts to Solomon, yet she brought not all that she had: but the believer, that comes to King Christ, excels her in this: have they little, have they meikle, they make a solemn surrender, resignation and dedication of their all to Christ, to be disposed of by him as he pleases; and when he, by his providence, calls them to leave all that they have, to take up their cross, and follow him: then they, with Moses, choose suffering rather than sinning.

3dly, Every believer excels the queen of Sheba, in this, that tho' she thought Solomon's servants happy, yet she did not choose to be one of his servants herself: but a believer that comes to Christ, not only thinks his servants happy, but presently engages himself in his service, with Paul, 'Lord, what would thou have me to do?' they are the servants that would have their ears bored to the post of his house, they like their master so well, and think it their greatest honour and dignity to be among his servants, working out their salvation and generation-work with fear and trembling.

4thly, Every believer excels the queen of Sheba, in that she enjoyed her privilege with Solomon but for a short season, and then she returned again to her own land, where she could have no more intimate converse, nor hear nor see his wisdom any more: but here is the great privilege of every believer: if once they have a real communion and fellowship with this true king Solomon, it is of a lasting and everlasting continuance: there is no possibility of a separation, they cannot return to their own land of a natural state again: once in Christ and ever in Christ: nothing can deprive them of this privilege, no place, no person, no affliction, no distress, not death itself: for they shall be ever with the Lord, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

This duty of meditation was a very profitable duty to me, in which I really found much of the Lord's presence with life and power: and when I was helped to keep at this duty, I found my spiritual enemies not so strong, but that I could debate with them: but I no sooner left this, but my enemies grew strong again, and many times overcome me with a sluggish and careless disposition, which robbed me of my jewels and love-tokens, and then the sin that easily besets me was my master, who dealt very cruelly with

me, and sent me back to my former prison and bondage, where my feet stuck fast in the mire, where there was no standing; then did I cry to the Lord for a delivery from this particular, which vexed me so excessively. While I was thus perplexed, not knowing what to do; then the promises appeared clearly to me, that he would deliver me; but faith and patience were my present duty. About this time there was in the family with me a very godly person, with whom I had very intimate converse, and had frequently taken sweet counsel together, in going to the house of God; in whose company I took great delight and satisfaction; and put much confidence in her, because of her religious converse; yet even this person lifted up her heel against me. O this afflicted me, and bred a great many uneasinesses in my mind! I would fain have overlooked it, so as not to let it vex me; but it would not do, for my proud spirit would not submit to this. I took this before the Lord, and besought him, that, as he had been my counsellor in all the former parts of my life; so he would also guide me in this, and let me know the language of this dispensation; for which I was answered with good words, 'That he would hear my cry, and that, before I asked he would answer.' O blessed refuge in time of trouble! and that my soul knows right well. There was a scripture the Lord answered me with, concerning the person that thus treated me, 'He that breaketh the hedge, a serpent shall bite him.' From these words I got some meditations, especially these, what the hedge was, that should not be broken down; and what the serpent was, that should bite them that brake down the hedge; which was all very suitable to the case in hand. This vexation continued a considerable time, from which I saw that I must have a full and personal experience of every trial, so that I may learn to sympathize with those that may be tryed with the same trials. And, as for this trial to myself, I was persuaded, that a delivery I would get, but how or in what manner, I knew not. There was one Sabbath-day, I being extremely assaulted with this temptation, I got leave to pour out my heart to the Lord anent it, as many times I did; where I saw clearly from the word, that a delivery he would send me; and several places of scripture were made over to me, such as this, 'That it is a time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be delivered out of it: hath he said it, and will he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and will he not bring it to pass?' And many other places: O it is easy to believe, when the Spirit of God shines on the promises, but when the promises are delayed and

deferred, so as providence seems to contradict it, that I find it a difficult work to believe against hope. O the ups and downs that were in my lot! For sometime, when I could not see through, I said, I shall leave this altogether.

There was something in this case so mysterious that I cannot record it, until time produce the event, which I intirely put as a blank in his hand, let him dispose of me as he will; it becomes me to be taken up with other things than my own concerns, especially when there is so great a word of an union betwixt the two nations, Scotland and England. O this afflicted me very much, knowing how treacherous England had always been to us in former times; especially in breach of covenant, which they have never yet seen to be their sin. And should we again join in a confederacy with such a deceitful and cunning people, who would, if it lay in their power, ruin all their neighbour nations, to advance their own interest? But that which most of all troubled me, was, that this union of theirs would prove a snare to our covenanted church of Scotland; for they that would ruin our state, would also ruin our church.

In the family where I was, there was some that appeared very much in the defence of this union, and bragged, that it would make us a rich and flourishing nation, and that they would defend us from all our enemies, and protect our church, and what not? But these were but vain words: it was really apparent to me that it would work our ruin. O but this lay weighty on my spirit! so that I could have been content almost to have been out of the world, my grief was such for what was a coming on this poor church and nation! For, when I was nearest to the throne of grace in prayer, it was there that I saw the sad consequences of this transaction. There were many places of scripture that appeared to me against it, but especially the 7th chapter of Hosea throughout, but particularly from the 5th verse, it was like a sermon from heaven against the union, it was as clear as the sun, that Ephraim mixed himself with the people, was like our mixing ourselves with England. And in the 11th verse, that we were like a silly dove without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria, a black gate indeed; and so to the end of this chapter, every verse was more suitable than another.

At this time none knew what the articles of this union were, they being kept so secret by all these noblemen and gentlemen that went up to treat about this black bargain; none was to know what they were, till the parliament met. O but this had a sad aspect to me! For I was persuaded,

fraded, that, had they been either good or honourable, they would not keep them so secret, it being a national concern.

When the parliament met, those that were for the union (Judas-like) seemed to be religiously concerned; and therefore a fast was appointed throughout the whole kingdom, in order to seek light and direction anent the union. O what mocking of God was this! to pretend to fast and seek counsel; whereas they were deterained already to have it accomplished, though it should be the ruin of the whole nation. My weight and concern grew more; and many errands it sent me to the throne of grace for my mother-church in Scotland. The sacrament was given at Leith, and I thought it a good opportunity to go there with all my grievances, in which place I communicated, and got that word for poor Scotland, 'This is my rest, here will I stay, for I do love it well.' Psal. cxxxii.

The Sabbath before the fast for the union, I came to Edinburgh, to hear Mr Webster, who was on the prodigal son, 'who would fain have filled his belly with husks;' which he compared to false doctrine, and applied it to the church of England, which was corrupted with the false husks. He named very many of their errors, but my memory cannot retain them distinctly; which gave me occasion to think, he designed this against the union, though at this time he knew not the articles of it. When I came home to the rest of the family, they told me, that, had I been at Libberton-kirk, I would have been pleased, for he seemed to be flat against the union. I told them I was at no loss, being so well where I was; but I was very well pleased to hear that any of the godly was against it; and the truth is, the most part of the godly in Scotland were against it, and that on just and solid grounds. As for my own private case, it seemed to leave me for a time, so that I was not so much troubled anent my own perplexities concerning myself, for I thought, let the Lord do with me what he will, but Scotland, Scotland lies near my heart.

The night immediately before the fast-day, I found myself in a very ill frame, capable for no duty, I was so dead and lifeless; nowise in order for the day approaching, which was heavy to me. This ill frame continued with me, until I was just casting off my clothes to go to rest; then I found a vehement desire arose in me to be at prayer again; which motion I followed, and desire to bless the Lord therefore. For in this place I enjoyed a sweet (though short) while of communion with God; where

clouds were removed, and I got leave to plead for my mother church, that he would make Jerusalem a quiet habitation. What a comfortable time was this! I intended only to ask good things for the church; but my liberal Lord, not only gave me good things for Scotland, but many great and good things for myself too.

I saw that sore judgments were abiding this land, and this union was a forerunner of them; but, that I might not be swallowed up in sorrow, these cordials were given me, from his word, 'I will cause the enemy to entreat you well. Surely it shall be well with thy remnant.' I also saw that there was a glorious day abiding Scotland, the like of which hath not been yet; and that my eyes should see it. This was confirmed to me by three scriptures, 'Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty. Ye shall not taste of death, till you see the kingdom of God come in power. Ye shall be brought to the grave in a good old age, as a shock of corn full ripe.' These sweet scriptures came with life and power; and I was made to believe, and lay stress on them. This bred in me hope of a good fast day approaching; and I thought, may be the Lord will confirm this to me in public. In the morning I was allowed near access to the throne of grace, when that word came with power, when I was pleading for the church of Scotland, Christ's married spouse, and my mother, 'Ask what you will and it shall be granted to you.' Where I was strengthened to put up these requests, "That God, for Christ's sake, would preserve the ark among us pure, without the mixture of Popery, Prelacy, and the church of England, with its errors in doctrine and worship. O let us be a church and nation as long as the sun and moon endure. Revive thy covenant work among us. O come back with days of thy wonted power, and let the womb of the gospel become fruitful, and bring forth many sons and daughters to Christ." I also did put up some requests against the union, and was answered with that word, Psal. xxxiii. 10, 11. 'The Lord bringeth the counsel of the wicked to nought; but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. He bringeth the ships of Tarshish with the east-wind.' When I came to the public, where I thought to be strengthened, I found the contrary; for I was wounded, and that to the heart. Mr Sermon was on that place, 'At what instant I spoke against a nation or kingdom,' &c. Where he endeavoured to please both parties, but especially those that were for the union. He said, "It is expected I will speak a-
"gent what this day is set apart for, concerning an union
"between

"betwixt Scotland and England; the truth is, said he, we are all one kingdom, we are all one island, we are all one religion, they are the greatest bulwark against popery." Thus he went on, to the grief of some, and to my grief also; for the application was very easy, that he spoke here for the union. After sermon I got leave to tell my mind again in secret against this black bargain; I would fain have believed that a stop would be put to it; yet I remained very discouraged with fear it would be. I was inquiring how the ministers of Edinburgh were pleased? They told me that Mr Sandilands said in his sermon, that, if this union was carried on, England would make us hewers of wood and drawers of water. This indeed looked something like plain dealing, and as he was a watchman to warn his people of their danger.

A little after this, the articles appeared; but this is such an unpleasant subject, that I weary to write how every thing contributed to the grief of my spirit; to see our noblemen and gentry, that were parliamenters, so mad as to go in with so unreasonable terms; there were none among them all to witness and appear for this poor nation but my Lord Belhaven, who spoke to good purpose, in his two speeches against the union, but to no effect, for this was concluded.

After all was done and over, I began to have some sad reflections on what had been done; and how melancholy it was that we were sold to the hands of our enemies, who ever sought our hurt, but never our well; for then were these things brought to my consideration: First, It but fares with Scotland as it did with Christ himself; for he was sold into the hands of his enemies, and what needs it be thought strange though they have sold his house and family! 2dly, Christ was sold by those in his own house and family, and so was poor Scotland; it was our own nobles and some of our gentry that did this mischievous thing. 3dly, Judas sold Christ for money, though he was not the richer of it; so our Judases sold this land for money, as they call equivalent; O sad equivalent! 4thly, After Christ was sold by Judas, then did they mock, reproach, and used all manner of contempt to this ever-blessed plant of renown; so it is with us; are we not become a reproach to all our neighbours? and those to whom we are sold, they use very bitter and malicious speeches against us, and with venom do they spue them out, to the grief of the most part of the godly in this land; and even they that are but true Scotsmen cannot but be touched with such indignities

dignities done to us. There was a word went much with me for some time, which I applied to this case, Isa. xlix. 19. 'The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.' I desire to bless the Lord, however it went, I was sometime, now and then, getting the King's ear in secret, which kept up my heart when almost sunk. As for the public ordinances, they were much deserted as to me, I found little of the Lord's mind there. I shall lay the blame on myself, and no other. I went to several places where the sacrament was given, but I found an absent Lord; yet I dare not say this altogether, for I heard Mr John Flint at one of them, on Rev. iii. 12. 'Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.' O what I felt of the love of God in this sermon! in every sentence I thought I found life, and power, and a vehement desire to be where I would go no more out to sin and a vain world again.

I was at another occasion at Newbottle, where, on Saturday's night, I got a sweet while in the field betwixt the Lord and my soul. At this time I had a great many weights on me, a weary body of sin and death, the sin that doth so easily beset me, and other things also.

On the Sabbath there seemed to be a very good frame both on ministers and people; but I remained very discouraged. At afternoon Mr John Flint preached on these words, Psal. iv. 8. 'I will lay me down in peace;' where he spoke to the sweet repose believers had with Christ at all times, though in trouble and distress; but that which was most refreshing to me was, he spoke to some that were sorely distressed for the indignity that was done to a covenanted work of reformation, in this late transaction betwixt the two nations; fearing that the Lord would leave his church altogether. "Be not afraid, said he, it is confirmed again and again, that the Lord will have a church in Scotland, while sun and moon endure; and though the wicked world lift up their horns to push the church, yet God hath his eight principal men to defend it, and fray them." This was life and marrow to my bones; for, though I got nothing particularly for myself, yet I was content of these sweet soul-refreshing tidings.

At this time the family where I was serving was resolved to go and dwell with their family at York, for which I was very much perplexed, and could have wished the contrary; but this was like the union, for nothing could hinder it, though it was told them it was not for their profit. They would

would heartily have taken me with them, but I absolutely refused, no terms would persuade me to this; for, though I loved the family, yet I loved not the place and people where they were going: for I was resolved to take my lot in Scotland, poor and despised as it was.

This place I left about the end of May, providence ordering my lot to be in the east country at Gilmertoun. The first Sabbath I was there, the sacrament was given at Tunningham, and I went there, but found not what I would have been at; yet, glory to the Mediator, I was not altogether deserted, though nothing in particular during my abode in this place. I think it my duty to record the Lord's way with me: as for my own case, I was extraordinarily assaulted with temptations of divers sorts, which I cannot mention; only I saw that unbelief and atheism were at the bottom of all. O what reason have I to wonder at and admire the goodness of God, in this especially, that gospel-ordinances were sweet and refreshing to me on the Sabbath days, by his servant, Mr Thomas Findlay! And though he was not my parish minister, and though with some difficulty I got to hear him at Prestonhall kirk, yet at my return I always thought my travel well wared, having still matter of praise put in my mouth: and, when providence ordered that I must go elsewhere, I found it was a lost Sabbath to me in the public; for which cause I most frequently went to Preston, he being on the sweet Psal. xxiii. 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.' It is impossible for me to record what I met with in these sermons; only this, I sensibly felt God's voice speaking to me by his servant; yet, notwithstanding of this, I was sorely distressed in secret duties; sometimes I could hardly breathe there, but sinful and unholy thoughts. I was indeed sorely pushed by the enemy; and, glory to God, on Sabbath days I ordinarily got a crumb.

There was one day in particular, when he was on these words, 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;' in this sermon I felt much of a present God, making me, not only to hear, but to apply it with comfort and delight: on the back of this I was strongly haunted, that there was some fore trial biding me, that would try me to purpose: and, as I was enabled, I cried to the Lord to be supported in, and win safely through the same, without grieving God, and offending the generation. I was in great fears what this trial was to be; I thought, what if I be left to be a reproach to the Lord's way? I thought on many things what it might be, but at last it broke forth in a strong and fearful temptation

tion to misbelieve all that ever the Lord did to me; I was extraordinarily haunted with atheistical and blasphemous suggestions, which made me cry to the Lord for help, but I got no sensible return; I rather grew worse; I was as one forsaken, and left to the will of the enemy of my salvation, and that which the enemy built his temptation on, was, because the promises were so contradicted by providences; I thought there was no reconciling of them, and my spirit was on the rack, on several considerations. I ordinarily resorted to the fields, and there roared over my atheistical and blasphemous thoughts, and that became I was in trouble, and could get no delivery; my corruptions grew on my hand, and the sin that so easily beset me, of which the Lord had promised me a delivery; but instead of this, I grew worse and worse, and no appearance of an out-gate. There were three things I compared to my case, which were very applicable to me at this time.

First, To a woman travailing with child, having a great many pangs, every one of them as if she were just now to be delivered, and yet bringing forth nothing but words.

Secondly, I compared myself to a ship on the sea, tossed with wind and storm; sometimes may be they will see the shore, and think, now we will win to land, and get rest from the billows; then presently comes a contrary wind, and blows them from all sight of landing: O then, how is their trouble increased!

Thirdly, I compared myself to a bird pursued by the glede or hawk: the poor bird comes to a bush, thinking to shelter there; but the pursuer comes and chafes it out, so that it can find no rest, being hurried from place to place; and so was I; for I thought, when storms were over, I would get rest; but these were but vain thoughts. For my trials increased visibly, and there were none I could commit my mind to, for I saw it was to no purpose.

I cannot forbear to record what length I came in this sad distemper: I could wish I were a beacon for others, to be aware of such desperate courses this day. I was sorely put to by the enemy, to misbelieve; and, being at dinner, I was observed not to eat; I passed this over with some excuse. But, O how long did I think to win out from all company! and it was almost impossible for me to conceal and hide my trouble, I was like to burst out in the place where I sat: I was like water seeking a vent, and must have it as soon as possible: I went to my wonted place in the fields; where I belched out with my mouth the very

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venom of hell against God and his ways, as if they were neither just nor equal: and that he was loading me with burdens I was not able to bear, neither would he remove them; and though he promised to be with me in trouble, yet now I am in the greatest of troubles alone, and can find no help: and in that very spot of ground I resolved to give over religion, and to believe no more; for it was impossible for me to reconcile the promises and the providences; yea, I thought, though an angel from heaven would come and speak to me, I could not believe. Only the God of heaven knows what a mad distracted fit I was in. When I had burst out my heart in these hellish provocations, and God-provoking expressions, I thought I was the most miserable creature in the creation; and thought, I am now undone for ever. And as I was walking up and down the place as one in a distemper, that word sounded in my ears, 'Dost thou well to be angry, Jonah? Dost thou well to be angry?' At this I was struck with admiration and astonishment; O wonder that the earth did not open, and swallow me up! Is God yet in speaking terms with me? O wonder at such unparalleled forbearance! Might he not have taken me at my word, and taken his leave of me, as I did of him? But he is God and not man, and therefore I am not consumed. This is (among many others) another proof of the Lord's kindness to me; then did I desire to mourn over what I thought offended my so kind Lord; but Oh! alas! alas! my corrupt nature!

About the beginning of October the sacrament was to be given at Preston: the thoughts of it were refreshing to me; thinking, if the ordinary Sabbaths there be so sweet, what will a communion-Sabbath be? O then, as I longed for it! but, that I might learn to know that he is not to be limited to any place, I got but a deserted ordinance to my up-taking, though I really believe the Lord was present there, both to ministers and people. But still I remained in the dark as to my own particular.

Another thing I have to remark in this place; I was most kindly dealt with in the family where I was, they were kind to a miracle, and in this I saw the Lord's hand, who performs all things well for me. I had a very sweet and refreshing converse with some of the godly in that place, though they were but very few in number: all things as to the outward man, went well with me there; so that I have no complaints but of myself. After I had spent some time there with the young lady whom I served,
and

and whom I loved very much, providence so ordered, that I must return to Edinburgh, which I did very cheerfully, having my dearest and most intimate acquaintances there, whose company I had a great deal of pleasure and delight in, and in our sweet fellowship meetings, which were accompanied with much of the Lord's presence to my soul, and that beyond what I can express. About eight days after came to Edinburgh, there happened to be a very surprising accident in our lodging, of a sudden fire, at twelve of the clock in the forenoon, by whom, it could not be known; but the house was burning, and the flame going to the streets out of the windows: and none of us knowing any thing about it that were within, my young lady and I being in a room near to it, we found a great smell of burning, and could not conceive what it was; I looked if any of our clothes had been near the fire; but, while we were thus inquiring betwixt ourselves, there comes one, who knocks at the door, and the cry arises, 'Fire, fire, the house is burning.' Hearing this, and running to the room door, I thought the house would have fallen down next minute; for there was the greatest flame ever I saw so near hand; it pleased the Lord, in his providence, it was got quenched quickly, and there was no great skaith, only a bed was intwely burnt: what effect this had on me, I cannot tell; but O the alarm of fire was never out of my mind!

Next day Sir David and my lady went for London, and left me and another servant to keep the lodging till their return. This was no small burden to me, having the impression of the late accident, and still fearing a greater; this like a ghost haunted me night and day. Another sad and dreadful fire happened, that same day eight days, in the Canongate head, about two in the morning; when the cry arose, I being sleeping, got up in a haste, and took such a trembling, that I could hardly win to the room door, fearing it was in the house again. We being in the Parliament clois, when I came to the window, I saw the terrible sight, both sides of the Canongate was burning at once. I was struck with astonishment and wonder, admiring the goodness of God that we were not in the same circumstances. This put an edge on my spirit, where I got leave to pour out my heart before the Lord, on their account that were suffering in this present stroke; and that he would prevent such desolating judgments in time coming. How I was affected at this melancholy sight, none on earth knows; but still I saw the Lord contending with us, and against us (but we could not see) by doubling the judgments

judgments in that place; for mine eyes had seen that same place burnt eleven years before. O how the heads and the hands of the worthies presented me, which had been set upon that port, where these flames were flying! These had secret language to me. This being about the end of November, the impressions of what I had seen haunted me, be where I would, at duty and from duty; I was never free of the fears of fire; I never left the lodging, but I thought there would be fire ere I returned. This became a very heavy burden to me, and no where could I be free of it. I thought, O if I had some godly person in the house with me, I would not be so feared. I got this; for I got a comrade of my own, whose religious converse was very sweet always to me, who came and stayed with me: but still my fears continued as formerly. I took this before the Lord, enquiring, what could be the language of it? Where I got a sharp reproof; and that of Micah was represented to me, 'Now am I safe, when I have got a priest to my house;' as if God were not sufficient alone. And yet my kind Lord was pleased to pity me, and himself lifted the load off my back, by his word, Psal. xci. 'There shall no evil come near thy dwelling; for I have given my angels charge concerning thee.' O how blessed was this word to me! it brought with it peace and quietness, as to this disquietment; so that I was no more in such excessive fear, though I was not altogether quit of it; but the great weight was removed. O how much have I to record of the goodness, wisdom, and wonderful conduct of providence, and care of God towards me, both with respect to my soul and inward concerns, and also to my body and outward concerns! So that I have reason to cry out, 'O how great is his goodness and mercy! and that my soul knoweth right well.' It becomes me, and is much my duty, to obey the apostles charge, 'Be careful about nothing; but in every thing let your requests be made known to God.'

There is yet another thing which exercised me for some time, which was about the month of November; there comes word from the queen and her council to keep a fast through the three kingdoms, on the 14th of January next to come. I read the queen's proclamation, where it was express, 'We, with the Lord's spiritual and temporal, ordain and appoint, that this day be kept for solemn humiliation and fasting; and that the Bishops are to form a prayer suitable for the day. At first reading and hearing of this, I did not well understand whether it was my duty

or not to join in such fasts as came from the civil power, when they did not consult our ministers, but only took counsel with their corrupt clergy in England, which we are solemnly covenanted against. On the other hand I was convinced, that fasting and humiliation was a necessary duty at this day and time. Thus was I in a strait what way to be determined, so as to please God, and keep a good conscience.

I took this matter before the Lord, and in his sight I desired to be determined by him alone, and none other; and whatever was his will to me, I besought he would let me know, and strengthen me to perform. While I was thus before the Lord, these two scriptures came to me with light and life, Col. iii. 21. 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.' Luke xvi. 12. 'He that will not be faithful in little, will not be faithful in much.' And I was persuaded, this was the Lord's mind to me concerning this fast. I had frequent occasion to converse on this head with several of the godly, what their thoughts were anent this fast. I found they were divided, some were for it, and some (but very few) were against it. And, as for our ministers, they all went in with it, so as to let us know they would keep it.

This raised a new storm in my breast, thinking, what if I be deceived in this matter, seeing that so great Christians and ministers were clear in the head? This put me to cry to the Lord, that he would pity me; and, if he was calling me to any thing that was singular, to give more than ordinary light. The confusion that was on my mind continued no longer than I went to duty, where I was confirmed again and again, that it was not my thoughts, but the Lord's, not to join with fasts that were imposed on us by a civil power, where prelates were a part of that court. I was also threatened, that, if I disobeyed the Lord's command in this, it should blune my conscience, in after-time to come, boldly to ask counsel; seeing that, when I got it, I would not obey. Then came that word of exhortation, 'Be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' This was a new confirmation. After this, let all sorts say what they will, I was persuaded in my own mind concerning it. The Sabbath immediately before this fast, I was in a very dead and lifeless frame, unbelief prevailed against me: where I began to think, what if I be in such a lifeless condition on the fast day, how will I spend the day in secret to the Lord? Thus was I vexed and uneasy in my mind, what to do until nine o'clock at night.

night, being in prayer, where the Lord was pleased to expostulate the matter with me thus: 'Wherefore do ye halt between two opinions? Is not obedience to my commands better than sacrifice? Must your frame determine your duty?' With this I was melted down before the Lord, and thought shame of my unaccountable ways; where I got a bright view of what he was calling me to, as also refreshment to my soul in a large measure, promises of counsel and direction; and that word came with power, Psal. xviii. 'The Lord shall light my candle, so that it shall shine bright. The Lord will make my darkness to be light; his thick clouds pass away, hail-stones and coals of fire.' Then did I start a question to the Lord. What if, after all this, I shall, by reason of my ignorance, comply in things of a greater and sadder consequence? I was answered with this, 'My strength shall be perfected in your weakness; is your complying in a little security to keep you in a great-er?' O what reason have I to wonder at his unspeakable pains towards the like of me, the most unworthy and ungrateful in the whole world! But what shall I say? 'He is God, and not man, and therefore I am not consumed.'

When this day of fasting was come, in the morning I found myself very unfit, either to mourn over my sins or the land's sins; but he that called me to the duty put strength in me; and though I could not join in the public worship that day, yet, I must say, I was much owned of God in secret. O what satisfaction I found reading 'The Confession of Faith!' What glorious days were in our land when that solemn covenant was made with the three kingdoms! What deep and hearty confession after the breach thereof! And after confession of sins, when they renewed covenant again, then the Lord returned to both ministers and people, and there were days of power in the land. Then I began to compare that time with the present age; and O what cause of mourning saw I, that none in public stations (such as ministers and magistrates) were making the breach of covenant a cause of fasting! And as for the ordinary sort of people, except a very small handful here and there, they knew no more of this covenant than if it had been written in Greek or Latin. O but this covenant was near my heart this day! and I was made in the bitterness of my spirit to mourn over the breach of it in my day, and that, First, At the revolution, when it should have been renewed, there was no mention made of it then, when that blessed instrument, king William, of blessed memory,

gave them leave to do for their religion what they pleased; yet this was quite forgot.

2dly, Are we not guilty of covenant breaking in the late treaty of union? O to win to mourn, "That we should have sold ourselves to be defiled by a nation whose errors we are solemnly covenanted against, as well the errors of the church of England as these of the church of Rome! Popery and Prelacy go hand in hand; and are we not covenanted, to the utmost of our power, to reform England?" And, because we did it not, therefore God in his justice hath left us to be deformed by them.

3dly, Is not this day's fasting a plain breach of covenant? To have our fasts from them that are avowed enemies to the covenant, as both the queen and bishops are, and yet to receive fasts from them, this is indeed a cause of mourning and lamentation. 'O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, to weep day and night for these things,' that few are laying to heart! I was made to cry to the Lord, that he would send a day of power among us; where I was made to see, that till this solemn covenant was, for the breach thereof, mourned over by all ranks, ministers and people, great and small, from the throne to the meanest subject in the land; that till then we would not have days of power, so as to reform the land from the iniquities thereof; and yet I got a sight that such days were coming. Then I desired, as I could, to mourn over my own sins, original and actual; but especially my predominant sin, that haunted me like a ghost, be where I will. I made mention of the land's sins; covenant breaking, the blood of the worthies that was shed, who suffered under the late reigns of Prelacy; these are cause of mourning.

Now, Lord, thou knowest I love thy covenant, and all those that avowedly own it; and, in testimony hereof, I, as in thy sight, take and swear myself to it personally, as it is in our confession of faith; and think myself as really bound as if I had been living, and taking it, in the year 1643; and think it my glory and honour that I was born in a land so solemnly married to the Lord. Thus I did in the sight of the great God, and when no other eye was present; and there I besought the Lord, if it were his will, I might live and see the covenant renewed by all ranks; this would be more joy to me than the world can express. Written and subscribed at Edinburgh, with my hand, January 14th, 1708.

Elizabeth West.

WHEN this was over, I began to inquire, whether I had been in my own duty or not? And was confirmed again and again, that I had done the Lord's commands; but more especially on the Saturday night after, it was a night of power on my soul, and much of the love of God in Christ was discovered to me.

And on Sabbath morning that word came, 'This is the day that the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice. Thou hast put more joy in my heart, than they when their corn and wine abounded.' This was a most blessed day to me, and it seemed as if it was a forerunner of the Lord's return to my soul, with days of wonted power. I thought, I was into the chambers, and there got leave to pour out my complaint and request, both for myself, and for the church and interest of Christ.

O how much of the loving-kindness of the Lord was manifested to me! which may make me cry out, with wonder, 'What am I? Or, is this the manner of man, O Lord?' Yet, notwithstanding of all this, I still had my own particular to grapple with; it was ever molesting and vexing my spirit; that which I could not make language to the world of, was making me go heavily, mourning, and with a bowed-down back; and though I durst not question the Lord's love to me, yet many times I cried, 'If I be thine, why is it thus with me?' As for this nameless distemper, I knew not well what to say anent it; only I saw it very uneasy to fight with. I got six thoughts, or meditations from it, wherein this ugly disease I was labouring under, differed from any other.

First, I thought it was a singular evil; I knew none in this case but myself.

2dly, I found it to be a secret distemper; I could not let it be known to any.

3dly, I saw a paradox in this; there was nothing in the world I would fainer been quit of, and yet there was nothing I would so fain been about with.

4thly, I thought it was inconsistent with grace, and that these were not the spots of God's children.

5thly, I thought it was inconsistent with former promises given to me, at solemn occasions, and in the day of my espousals.

6thly, I saw, that the more I thought to quit and part with it, the closer it sticks with me; I sometimes could appeal to heaven, whether I would be more content to be at liberty, than to be in bondage as I was. O the bitter cries and complaints it brought from me! begging he

would relieve me from this difficulty ; ' O send me deliverance, for thy own name's sake ! ' What speed I came, was only, that many sweet promises were given me, from that sweet Psalm xci. but my difficulty was not removed, and I was still in the place of trouble. In this case I remained a long time : and tho' I dare not doubt the Lord's kindness to me many ways manifested, yet this bitter pill was like a dead weight on me. O the body of sin and death is a heavy burden !

As to my outward concerns, all things went right ; I had much love and respect from these among whom I dwelt ; I must acknowledge, there was much of the goodness of God manifested to me. As I was a servant, I many times besought the Lord, that he would give me a spirit and knowledge to go about my concerns in the family, and that I might please my master and mistress ; for I still saw, if any thing went wrong in my management, religion would suffer. O for thy glorious name's sake, teach me my duty in this ! I was heard : for I truly saw, that what I did, though it was not so well as others would have done it, yet my lady and the rest were so content, that I was many times astonished, and made me cry out, ' Thou art the God that performs all things for me.'

I continued in this family till November, at which time my lady and the family were going for London ; and willingly would they have had me going with them, but nothing could persuade me ; for I saw that it was not my duty. I was, and am persuaded, that nothing I have an aversion to, should be gone in with by me. Now, by my not going with them, I disappointed myself of service ; but, since it was not my duty to go, I was firmly made to believe that I would be provided for ; and so I was, for in a very few days I was settled to be mistress in the Trades Hospital, for these children to teach them. This seemed to be a very promising through-bearing ; but all my fears was, that I was not enough qualified for such a post. I besought the Lord on this account, and was answered with good words.

I entered to this family about the 5th or 6th day of November, 1708. During the short time I was in this place, I shall, as the Lord assists, remark how he dealt with me. At my first entry I was very kindly received by all concerned ; and this continued for sometime : I saw the Lord's hand assisting me in whatever I was employed about, which filled me with wonder at his wise conduct, even in outward things, contrary to my expectation ; yet, notwithstanding all

all this, I never went to prayer alone, and got any breathing, but I was made to cry, that this might not be the place of my abode; and that word went still with me, 'I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.' On this word I was made to believe and hope.

Sometime after this, I fell in a great deadness of spirit, especially in secret prayer; I had no life, no breathing; but, when I was in family prayer with the children, or dropping any word for their instruction, then I sensibly felt assistance, and that with power and life to my soul. But on the back of this, when I went to secret, there I was as dry and sapless as a stick; when I went alone, I was indeed all my alone, all I had for my companion was unbelief, atheism, mistrust, and quarrelling the Lord's unfaithfulness in making out his promise to me. In short, the enemy was present, and his work was to suggest such terrible thoughts against a work of grace in my soul, that it is not convenient for me to record them. Yet, when I came again to the family, I almost was in a rapture, in commending Christ and his ways to be both pleasant and profitable, in all cases, in all places, and at all times. O what seeming contradiction was in my case! for, when I returned to secret, then I was almost persuaded that I was nothing but a perfect hypocrite, a whited wall, a painted sepulchre; appearing to be something to others, but was not what I seemed to be. I thought all the religion I had was but a form of godliness, without the power; and many such thoughts were suggested to me, and I gave way to them, and with my heart, entertained them, as real truths not to be questioned. O I cannot express the extraordinary disquietment, discouragement, and extreme melancholy I was under; for I could not understand the Lord's way with me: I had troubles from without, and trials from within, sinking me in the deeps, where there was no standing in the mire of unbelief; neither could I see the Lord giving me one look of pity or help, nor answering my heavy bitter supplications, which put the loadstone on my burden.

At this time I had four fore and heavy burdens on my back; 1st, Outward troubles of several sorts. 2dly, Great and fore-temptations from the enemy, tempting me to atheism, mistrust, quarrelling the Almighty. O as the fiery darts flew about my ears! 3dly, A load-weight of inward corruption. 4thly, Which was heaviest of all, an absent and angry Lord. This so disheartened and disquieted me, that I had neither heart nor hand for duties; but was dead,

senseless, and secure. In this case I went from duty to duty, sorrowing as one without hope of any out-gate. About this time there was word that the sacrament was to be given; and though that sometime a day this report was sweet to me, on the thoughts of a communion; yet it was not so now. I resolved, I would not venture on such a solemn work; only, lest I should give offence, I was minded to wait on, so as none might suspect me,

Now, to help forward my unfitness for this great work, I cannot forbear to remark one dispensation more. That same week the sacrament was intimate, one night, as I was in my closet, about nine of the clock at night, (and, although I was many times ill employed there, yet I durst not omit frequently to go to that place) while I am sitting alone writing, I heard one that belonged to the family take an occasion from my being there; to speak very bitterly, and make a very heavy charge against me, for being, as they said, so frequently in that place; and took a liberty to reproach religion on my account, and that very openly and publicly before the most part of the family. I heard a good while ere I spake one word; but at length I broke out in a most passionate anger, and ill-natured expressions; I being at this time in a very ill frame of spirit otherwise, the enemy wrought with my proud and corrupt nature to a very great degree. O how this fit of passion seized on both my body and mind! so that I drew this inference from it, I was resolved not to communicate; and now providence hath so ordered it, that I am not in a case, either temporal or spiritual, to set about it.

Now was I plunged in a deep where there was no standing. I thought the anger of the Lord is gone out against me; so that my heart sank within me like a stone. I continued for some time in this disorder, and I was resolved never to let my case be known to any in the world.

Now, when I was thus distressed, hopeless and helpless, more lying on me than I was able to bear; then was it that the tender-hearted Samaritan (the Lord Jesus-Christ) passed by me, and saw me an object of pity. O that merciful, compassionate, and condescending Lord! who first brought me to the wilderness, and then spoke comfortably unto me.

This being the Sabbath before the sacrament, as I was hearing Mr Millar in the Lady Yester's Kirk, I was both wounded and comforted in that sermon. I thought I was that person that was crying and complaining, when I cry and shout, he putteth out my prayers; I have no experi-

ence of the answer of prayer; but ere this day was done, I felt other things: I found the warm breathings of his Spirit melting me down to an entire submission: 'Let him do to me as he thinks good.' The Lord was very gracious to me, where I began to think on setting about solemn work. The sense of his goodness continued with me; and many sweet promises I got renewed, that he would give me a delivery from all my raging enemies.

On the fast day, Mr. Millar was on these words, 'Wilt thou not revive us again, O Lord? that thy people may rejoice.' The very reading of his text was half a sermon to me, my heart went so out with it. I bless the Lord, he had a very satisfying sermon, and I was made to hear with application to my soul; and, after I came home to secret, I felt a present God upholding me.

Next day I was neither up nor down; but betwixt the two, waiting, depending, and trusting that all would be well.

On Saturday I was under great discouragements; questions were put to me by the enemy, that I could not well answer; and this was concerning the out-making of some promises that were very dark to me. In the mean time I wanted not what might have borne me up under any difficulty whatsoever; and that was a large sight and view of God's love to my soul, and that he was about to deliver my soul from these racking disquietments that so distracted and discouraged me in the way of duty. This I was undoubtedly to believe; and, when discouragements seemed as if they would be about with me again, then these words came in with power, and I was made to express them with vigour and life, believing they were really from the Lord, Psal. xlii. 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Still trust in God; for I shall have yet good cause to praise him.' And many times that word was put in my mouth, 'My Lord, thou art right!' This is without doubt or question; I am fully persuaded of this. O the comfort, quietness, and satisfaction this brought on my disordered mind! to such a degree, which is not to be expressed, but is better felt than told.

When I came to the place of public worship, one Mr. Bird, a strange minister, preached on these words, Song ii. 16. 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' O but this was a seasonable, and confirming sermon to me! I thought he told me my case, as if he had known what past between God and my soul in secret, which none in the world knew. O
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the unspeakable comfort I found, in having my interest in Christ so manifested to me, both in secret and public, where my long offended Lord seemed to be at friendship with me again; and that he was about to deliver me from my strong enemy; and that the delivery was to be like the flying of birds, very swift, sudden, satisfying, and suitable: this I was made to believe.

On the morrow, being Sabbath, the day of our great solemnity; in the morning, I found fear and discouragement beginning to arise; but I was helped through grace to believe they would not overcome me. I came to the place of public worship, where Mr Millar was wonderful on the love of God; but I found a great deadness on my spirit, and could not hear right, but grew worse, and very disordered. Then began I to reason the matter, what I should do with this corrupt nature of mine, that cannot wait on the Lord without distraction? Where I saw it to be my plain duty, to bring all these weaknesses to Christ, who only could mend them. I came to the second table in a very bad frame: but I desired to make mention of Christ's righteousness only, his intercession, not mine: I saw my own vileness and weakness: and in the sense of this, I sat down to the table where Mr Bird served; where I could neither speak nor think: yet I had great expectations that the Lord would do something more for me, even at this present time. The minister that was serving the table had these expressions, 'Believer, may be thou art saying, I cannot find what I expected: but I must tell thee, he hath a better dish and cup provided for thee than what thou hast in hand.' With that word, Christ came along to my soul with an extraordinary measure of his Spirit and power. I sensibly found a change, and these two words came with life and force, 'Ye shall be ever with the Lord.' 'And when ye go through the valley and shadow of death, I will be with you.' O how this refreshed my drooping spirits, 'That I would be ever with the Lord!' This is all I am seeking for time and eternity; this will make out all the deferred promises, spiritual and temporal: I desire no more. This was a very blessed time to me, and through the whole day it went very well with me. And, when I came home, I found him in secret, and got sweet intimations of his love; this was indeed a day of power on my soul, and I hope to many others, as well as to me; it being April 3. 1709.

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On the morrow I returned to the public worship, with a sense of the Lord's love manifested to me, and heard sermons very suitable after such an occasion. Through the week following I wanted not temptations to misbelieve again; but no sooner I betook myself to the Mediator, but presently they fled away.

On Sabbath next, our minister, Mr Millar, preached on these words, 'The King brought me into his chambers.' O what reason have I to bless the Lord for these sermons! They were the very language of my soul: and indeed, 'The King brought me into his chambers;' I went not in of my own accord, but he brought me. O but this was a sweet and comfortable time to me! For I lived an heaven upon earth, in comparison of what storms I had undergone for five years before this; where I was racked and tortured between the promises and providences, and could not get them reconciled; but now there was a great delivery. I saw all the promises, all in Christ; and he would make them all out in his time.

I compared myself to a ship, that had been long at sea, and by reason of many storms, was all broken in pieces, but yet, broken as it was, the wise Master-Pilot, the Lord Jesus Christ, brought this tossed vessel to a safe harbour in himself. The enemy would sometimes assault me, and say, Ye must go to sea, and meet with a new storm again: but I thought, I could appeal to God himself, that I could not at this time enter new trials, until I was better mended. I besought him, that he would keep me from entering again to engage with new difficulties, till I got sufficient strength to answer the enemy. I was like a woman new brought to bed, whose strength comes not presently to her, but yet she is sensible of her delivery, but is unable to engage to any strong piece of work. My kind and sympathizing Lord seemed to give ear to me in this thing: O what of his wonders do I experience! Notwithstanding this sweet deliverance I had got to my soul, yet I found there was something more I had to seek, and that was a temporal deliverance also; for he hath given me the upper springs, and will he not give me the nether springs also? Now, the case was this: in the family where I was, there was a person that rendered my life most uneasy in many respects, which is not convenient to name: but, whatever they were, it was like to have these three sad consequences: First, To make me discontent with my lot and station, though otherwise very desirable, *adly*, it was like to render me useless and insignificant, so that I could

could not be profitable to those of whom I had the charge. 3dly, Religion was like to suffer, and the way of God to be ill spoken of, on my account. These things affected me mightily; for which I besought the Lord for a deliverance from this place; for I saw, as clear as the sun shines, nothing else would do it; for both fair means and foul means were tried to do away these contentions, but nothing would take effect. I again and again cried for a deliverance in his own way, and was made to believe that a deliverance was very near, though I neither knew how, nor what way, it was to be brought about. There were two scriptures that gave me great ground of hope, 'I am the Lord that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.' The other was, 'Surely the Lord will perform what concerneth me.' O but this was a sweet time to me! the answer of prayer quickly given. Some weeks ago I was saying, I know not what the answer of prayer is, I cry, but he shutteth out my prayers: but now I feel it otherwise.

This was a very confirming time, where all my former experiences and promises were made clear to me, that they were no delusions, but really from the Lord. On the eighteenth day of this month, the enemy began to assault me, as if my hopes of a present deliverance were vain: I was in great perplexity, and went to my sweet advocate in duty, where I got leave to pour out my complaint in his bosom: mean time I was thus pouring out my soul before him, one comes and knocks at the door; and O but I had ill will to be disturbed! but at length I opened: what their errand was, they did not tell me, but in a short time events proved, that they were sent to me as an answer of prayer.

These things I would not so particularly record: but it is to let us see the care and concern the Lord hath on his poor people, when in trouble, even with respect to their external concerns: he hath a fatherly and tender heart, he pities and helps in the most convenient seasons. I must acknowledge, that this dispensation of providence to me, the vilest and unworthiest of all his creatures, was so remarkable, and exactly the return of prayer, in all the circumstances of it; that I am more and more every day made to wonder and admire at his wise conduct of providence, not only toward my soul, for which he hath done great things; but also with respect to my lot in the world. But I may say with the Psalmist, 'He is the God that performeth all things (well) for me, spiritual and temporal.'

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I get nothing but what he makes me first cry to him for by prayer, and then, in his own time and way, he answers and performs what he hath made me believe. O happy are they that have so good a God to trust in!

But, to come to what I intended, there was an intimate comrade of mine, with whom I have had many sweet and pleasant hours in prayer and converse one with another; we could commit heart-secrets to one another with a great deal of freedom, without fear, being persuaded of one another's true and real friendship; this person sends for me, and after some time's converse, she proposed several questions; what she meant by them I could not understand, neither had I any thought to inquire at her why she asked such things at me; only I thought it came in as our ordinary converse, and so passed by without a reflection on it.

The time wherein our lot is fallen looks very gloomy, as if a storm were approaching; we had the more need to lay up our winter-provision, and, like wise Joseph, in plenty to provide for famine, for we have had both plenty and purity of gospel-ordinances in Scotland for a considerable time; but, what scarcity there may be, only the Lord knows.

The last time we were together, there were some communications among us about the principles of our religion. Would to God we were all better grounded in them than we are! for by this time, that we might have been teachers of others, we are to be taught the first principles of religion, to our shame may we speak it. There is a word in Jude, ver 3. (which the Lord is calling us seriously to consider this day) 'Earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints.' There are two lessons to be learned from these words: First, That as God has handed down a faith to his people, so they should be so settled and confirmed in it, that they may be able to contend for it when it is called in question. 2dly, We may learn, in all ages of the church, there have been some to oppose and contradict the faith, otherwise there were no need of contending for it. Every Christian should choose a faith, which they should stand by, against all oppositions: choose a faith and keep it, do not waver from it, to be of one religion to-day and another to-morrow; only choose not that religion which you cannot contend for from the word. This must be our only rule, if we would make a good choice. Now, a question may be proposed, How shall we know what religion to choose, there are so many opinions

opinions now in the world? That one says, we have the faith; another says, we have it: a third says, none other but we have it. Now which of all these shall we believe?

The truth of it is, a difficulty to know who is rightest. But, to be particular, there are two opinions now a-days, Presbytery and Episcopacy; they seem to be both one, they worship all one God, they have all one Bible, preach both one doctrine: there seems to be good men of both sorts; and yet they cannot be reconciled together: for they are opposing and contending one against another, as much as any two opinions in the world. And yet, we think, there are not two so like other as they are. Now, this holdeth us in a strait betwixt two; so that we know not which religion to choose.

For answer to this question, there seems to be difficulty; but the spirit of God, by his holy word, can resolve it easily. Whereas you say, there are many opinions in the world. It has been so in all the ages of the church; there have been many false prophets, false priests, and false teachers, that have led their people in a wrong way, and yet made them believe that they were right. Let us therefore take the apostle's advice, 1 John iv. 1. 'Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits.' Do as the noble Bereans did, search the scriptures, and see whether these opinions be founded on the word of God or not; and chuse that religion that goes nearest to the rule of God's word, and that which is freest from the inventions of men mixt in with it. Do not say, I was brought up a Presbyterian, and therefore I love that way best; I was brought up an Episcopal, and therefore it is best; whatever religion I was brought up in, I think it the best. This is not right reasoning. You must try these, whether they be right or not. Take not your own thoughts of religion, nor yet another's thoughts of it. May be your fathers were led by bad principles, and you do the same? You must not follow your fathers example, if it be wrong, as you may read, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. We use to say, 'We should try ere we trust.' We take nothing on trust but religion. If it were a matter of the greatest indifferency, if we be receiving money, we will look if it be good, because abundance of ill money goes through the country; when we go to eat, we look if our meat be clean; if we be going on the sea, we will try if the ship be good: if we buy an interest, we will look if our security be sufficient. But, alas! religion is taken up at our foot, whereas it is the thing that should

should be of the greatest concern to us, before any temporal thing in the world. Therefore choose impartially that religion which is nearest to God's word, and freest of the inventions of men, which have no warrant from the scriptures. Beg that God would enlighten your eyes, to discern betwixt the right and the wrong way; for, if your foot slip into the wrong way, you are then in greater hazard than you are aware of. Whereas you say, you cannot know a difference betwixt Presbytery and Prelacy: Assuredly there is one, and a great one too, such as they will never be reconciled together, for as like others as you think them. There are many things like other, that are not of other; counterfeit is like gold, steel is like silver, Bristol stones are like diamonds, to those that have not good skill. But let us bring both Presbytery and Prelacy to the gold-smiths of the holy scripture, and there to be tried.

Ye say, they worship both one God. That is true. But they do not both worship him in like manner. The manner of our worship is to be looked to, as well as the object of our worship. It is as great a sin to worship the true God in a wrong way, as to worship a false god, which is clear, from the first and second commandment. But wherein do they differ in their worship? say you. There is the same difference betwixt the worship of the Presbyterians, and the worship of the Episcopalians, that was betwixt the worship of the children of Judah, and the children of Israel. The children of Judah worshipped God, according to his own appointment, in the temple at Jerusalem; whereas the children of Israel worshipped the same God, but in a wrong manner: for they followed the new inventions of king Jeroboam, who set up calves at Dan and Bethel, which became a sin and snare to them; for which God was very wroth and angry, that they had corrupted the true worship of God, for the pleasure of their king; for they say, upon the matter, 'We will obey our king's command, though it be contrary to God's command.' In this they complimented the king with their own conscience, for inventing such an easy way of worship. The king again complimented them for their quick obedience to his new invented worship, and advances them, making priests of the lowest of the people, though contrary to God's command, as we may read, 1 Kings xii. 16.

Is it not just the same with Presbyterian and Prelatic worship? The Presbyterians worship God according to his own appointment, without any inventions of men

whatsoever, purely without mixture; whereas Prelacy is so mixed with the inventions of men, that they are wholly corrupt, both in doctrine and manners; for which the Presbyterians will never agree with them. There are many things wherein they will never agree, but especially these fix things, all which are their own invention.

1st, The Presbyterians will never agree with Prelacy, because they have invented a new head to the church; they will have the king to be head of the church, so that, whatever he commands, must be obeyed, under pain of rebellion.

The king may invent new laws in the church when he pleases, though they be contrary to God's command, yet he was obeyed by the Prelatics, and their companions; whatever the king bade them do they did it; and in so doing, they complimented the king with their consciences, and one of Christ's titles; they robbed Christ of his royal prerogatives, to be the King and Head of the church, who is a King of kings, and Lord of lords. Psal. ii. 6. 'I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.' Now the Presbyterians never consent to this: for they will have Christ to be the only head and law-giver to the church. And be king or prince who will, that would take the crown from Christ's head, to set it on theirs; they think it their duty to contend against it with all their might and power, though they should be called traitors and rebels, imprisoned, banished, hanged, headed and tormented; as has been done to many honest men in Scotland, for contending for Christ's kingly authority; they cared not for princes' frowns or favour, if they could not have it with a good conscience. They believed God's word to be true, which he spoke by the prophet Samuel, 1 Sam. xii. 25. 'If ye still do wickedly, you shall be consumed, both you and your king.' Tho' otherwise they are the best of subjects to their king; they will own, protect, and defend him with their lives and fortunes (but only in the Lord;) and, in so doing, they do but what God commands, to be subject to their higher powers. Good kings are a blessing to a kingdom: and they are worse than brutes, that will not obey their lawful commands. Now, let us tell our minds, as in the sight of God, whether is Presbytery or Prelacy nearest to God's word? The one will have the king head of the church, the other will have Christ.

2^{dly}, Presbytery will never agree with Prelacy, because they have invented new officers to the church, Lord Bishops.

Bishops. This is a compliment the king puts on them, that they shall be great men in pomp and power, to rule and over rule their underlings the curates; and these proud ambitious men must have my lord, and please your lordship, at every word; though they pretend to be ministers of Christ; whereas they will not preach twice or thrice in a twelvemonth; and yet they must have so many thousands yearly to maintain them, their coaches and hories; and who but them! This is not like the Bishop that Paul describes, Timothy. There must be no lording over Christ's flock; he is their chief Lord Bishop, and no other deserves the title. The godly in all ages have left their testimony against lordships in the church. Our great reformer, Mr John Knox, when king Henry offered him a bishopric, he answered, that the proud title of lordships, it having too great a co-union to Antichrist the Pope, was not tolerable to be in the church of God. Whereupon the Bishops, and the rest of the clergy, said to him, We are sorry that you will not agree with our order. He answered, And I am sorry that your order will not agree with Christ's institution. It was a saying of Mr Alexander Shields, The Lord Bishop is an institution that God never instituted in the church; for all the officers in the church have a relation to the flock, but the Lord's Bishops to rule over the shepherds themselves. But ye may say, these are but mens thoughts, so not to be regarded; but, will you take Christ's testimony against lordships in the church? Luke xxii. 24, 25, 26. There was a strife amongst the disciples, who should be the greatest; their sweet Lord and Master reproves them, and says, 'This is the practice of heathens to exercise lordship over one another, but it must not be so among you; ye must be as servants one to another, and not as lords.' So then lordships in the church are contrary to God's words, and are to be abhorred by all true Christians. Have not Lord Bishops been the greatest plague that ever Scotland met with? A Bishop betrayed the church, the Bishops have corrupted the church with their doctrine and manners; were they not (for the most part) a pack of proud, ambitious, lazy men? If they got their backs and bellies pleased, and their worldly honours kept up, they cared not what became of the poor folk under their charge; they were like so many proud Hamians, because the poor Mordecais would not give them homage, they up with the gallows, and hanged, and headed, as fast as it was in their

power; they were rather like tods to worry the sheep, than shepherds to protect and feed them.

Now the Presbyterians will never agree with Lordships in the church, because Christ is the only Lord Bishop; now, in this, whether is Presbytery or Episcopacy rightest?

3d'y, Presbytery and Prelacy will never agree, because Prelacy hath invented a new way of worshipping God by a set form of prayer, which they call, 'The book of common prayer.' Truly they have given it a right name, for it is but a common prayer indeed, it is not the book of spiritual prayers, so it cannot be acceptable to God, who only must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Of all the books in the world, it is the most uselefs and unreasonable, to think that a book can teach us to pray to God; whereas it is the office of Christ, as a Prophet, to teach; we need not employ Christ when we have a book to teach us. O what can all Prelacy at precious Christ, that they strike so hard to rob him of his glorious titles! The king must have one, the Bishop another, the service book a third. O unreasonable, to print prayers! Prayer does not consist in words, Rom. viii. 26. 'The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered.' Great Mr Samuel Rutherford says, They cannot print sighs and groans; so then printed prayers are but toothlefs and pithlefs. John Knox writing to a gentlewoman, exhorts her to beware of the service book, for it was but the dress of Popery. It is a most unreasonable book, if we will consider the relation God comes under to his people; he is their Husband, their Father; what needs the wife a book to learn her how to speak to her husband? Or the child a book to speak to his Father? The intimacy that is betwixt them, produces converse; but it seems the Prelates and their companions have little intimacy with Christ. For as a godly minister said, they speak to him as if they had never spoken to him all their days before. Think they, by their printed prayers, to compliment Christ out of his rights? Many sweet hour the people of God enjoys with him without a prayer book. Where got Jacob his prayer book, when he wrestled all night, and prevailed? To be sure, printed prayers cannot be called wrestling, so neither can they prevail. What if a man going to a physician with a distressed and disordered body, one meets him, and says, I will give you a book that will teach you how to make your distemper known to the doctor? O! says the man, that is unreasonable. I know my trouble better than

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all the books in the world can tell me: they need not want a prayer book, that have an ill heart. So is this new invented way of worship, the Presbyterians will never agree with Prelacy; because it is not of God's appointment; for in all the scripture we never read of a prayer book. Now, is this, whether is Presbytery or Prelacy rightest, to serve God by a form, or in spirit?

4thly, Presbytery will never agree with Prelacy; because they have invented some holy-days, no where warranted in all the scripture, such as the 25th of December, which they call Yule-day, or Christmas, on which day, they say, Christ was born: therefore, in testimony of their thankfulness, they will eat the best meat, and drink the best drink that can be had, and in so doing, they think, they put respect on Christ's birth day. But the truth is, the observation of this day is rather to please their greedy appetite, than any thankfulness for his birth; but that religion goes best down, that consists in worldly honours, and sensual pleasures. O souls! do ye think that your eating will be pleasing to him, when you are using his good creatures to excess? But, how do they know that he was born on this day? Or, where have you any express command for the observation of it in such a manner? Would you know the original of Yule-day? In the year 1521, in the time when Popery overspread these lands, there was one Julius Cæsar, to whom this day was kept in memory of him: and therefore was called Yule-day: but after this, they thought fit to celebrate it to the honour of Christ's birth, therefore it was called Christmas. Now, you see they have no other warrant for keeping this day, than what the church of Rome has taught them. But some may say, may we not eat good meat on that day, as well as on other days? Yes, you may; for, under the New Testament, all meats may be made use of for the support of nature, all days are alike, but to eat that meat, that is prepared for the superstitious observators of Yule-day, (it being a sacrifice to an idol) is expressly forbidden, 1 Cor. viii. Now the Presbyterians will never agree with this: and, because they knew not Christ's particular birth day, they will every day remember it with thankfulness, it being the blesseddest news that ever came to the world: therefore they will not be bound up to a yearly, but a daily remembrance.

5thly, Presbytery will never agree with Prelacy, because they are avowed enemies to the work of reformation and godliness, especially to the covenants, both national and solemn league, which were sworn to, both by king and coun-

try: and God in an eminent manner witnessed with them, in giving his holy Spirit, at that time when it was sworn, with lifted up hands: so Scotland was given to God in covenant, and all that were therein. This was our glory beyond all other nations; they being warranted from the word of God, for what they did, 2 Kings xi. 17. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31, 32. Nehem. ix. 38. But Prelacy abhors and disdains to be in covenant with God: so much they evidenced, in that they put the most contemptible disgrace on it that was possible; they burnt it at the market-cross of Edinburgh, by the hand of the hangman, in the sight of the sun, not being ashamed of what they did; like those in Jer. viii. 13. What unparalleled cruelty did they execute in those that did own the covenant? There was not a godly person that could live in quietness for them, but was hurried to holes and bores, yea, banished out of the kingdom. Some were intercommuned, none durst speak to them, nor give them a meal of meat, or a night's quarters, under pain of death. And, when they got any of them among their hands, the gallows and the maiden wanted not employment, as well for women as for men; the hangman had an hot trade of it, as the cross and Grassmarket can testify. O how did they spue out their venom against any in whom they saw the image of God! You know that it is ordinary to desire to hear the last words of a dying person: but they were so wickedly set against the Lord's servants, that, when they put them to death, for fear that any should have been edified by them, they caused beat the drums to fast, that none could hear them: the reason they gave, O says they, they are mad men. The truth is, they wanted nothing that lay in their power to make them mad, (So common says, 'Oppression makes a wise man mad.') They took their estates from them; they left their families destitute of food and raiment; they were tormented with the boots and thumbkins, which was enough to make them mad; but God wonderfully supported them; they were quartered and their bowels ripped up, yet this was not all; for, after they had headed and put them to death, they took their heads and hands, pricked them up upon the posts and other public places, that all might see them as they passed by. Mr Alexander Shields says, that the Prelates and their companions did not use so much civility to Christ as the Gadarenes did, for they besought him to depart out of their coasts, but Prelacy desperately fought Christ out of Scotland. Christ says, 'In as much as they did it to these, they did it to me.' But, God be thanked, it lay

not in their lordly power so to do; Christ has yet again visited this poor land, and hath delivered us from their tyrannical government. Now, give your thoughts; what think you of these things? *

6thly, Presbytery will never agree with Prelacy, because they have invented a new way of doctrine; they preach up morality, as it were saving grace; they say, that if we do ill to no man, and live honestly with our neighbours, there is no fear of salvation. Which is all one as to say, that we are justified by the works of the law; which is downright error, as the whole book of Galatians doth testify. Many poor souls have been deluded with this sort of doctrine. The truth is, there can be no true religion without morality, it is absolutely necessary; but our justification is only by Christ's righteousness. There have been a great many that have been good moralists, that have come short of saving grace, Mark x. 20. There is a young man that came a great length; he kept all the commandments, and yet he lacked one thing, Luke xviii. There is a Pharisee that came a great length, 11, 12, 13. verses, and yet he came short of saving grace; but let men have never so much morality, if they never knew what it was to see themselves lost by nature, and that all their righteousness is but as 'filthy rags,' which hath made them run to Jesus Christ for salvation, all the morality in the world will not save you.

Now, do ye see a difference betwixt Presbytery and Prelacy? You thought that there was none, but events prove the contrary; when the mask is taken off Prelacy's face, it is no more like Presbytery than clay is like gold, or light like darkness; therefore we may lawfully contend for Presbyterian government against all the opposers thereof.

O bless God, ye inhabitants of Scotland, that God has delivered this poor land from Popery and Prelacy; and beg of God that we may never come under these erroneous, bloody butchers hands again. There are many in Scotland this day that can set their seal to it, that they never knew what a work of conversion was on their spirits, until Presbyterian ministers came among them; they were wholly ignorant of that; and that now, through God's blessing, have been made to close a bargain with Christ, and they would not return to Prelacy for ten thousand worlds.

But here a question may be proposed, 'What if Prelacy come among us again, and it come to that, there is not a Presbyterian minister to be heard, under pain of death; may we not hear a curate, if he be a man of a blameless life? Better take coarse meat than die for hunger.'

Answer,

Answer, Was you ever convinced that Presbytery was the way of God; and therefore you have communicated with them, and sworn yourself to the covenanted work of reformation, be the hazard what will, though persecution should arise? After this, to hear a curate, it is perjury, apostacy, and adultery.

1st, It is perjury; therefore beware of it. You have sworn to the covenant, as all Scotland have done, (for your fathers swore in your name), and yet to hear a curate, one of its avowed enemies, it is no less than a manswearing of yourselves.

2dly, It is apostacy; beware of it: for the first beginning of it may appear but very small, to hear a curate, because he is a man of a blameless life; this will lead you on bit and bit, till at last you will make no scruple to hear any of them; and by this means you will apostatize from the truth, by drinking in their errors, which are not a few.

3dly, It is adultery. You know a woman, when she marries a husband, if he of necessity must leave the country for a while, shall she, in a petted fit, take another in his room? No, she must rather have patience until her husband returns: it is just so in the matters of religion, you must keep yourselves chaste and pure from all others; tho' all the powers of wicked men were set against you, you must say, I have married a husband, I cannot take another; I will rather lose my life than be an adulteress. You need not fear want, so as to die for hunger; your good husband, Jesus, (whose cause you have married), will provide spiritual food, and though you want in public, he can make it up in secret. You need not fear, Scotland never wanted pure ordinances in the worst of times, though they were hunted to holes and bores. Beware then that ye eat not meat mixed with poison, because you cannot get such plenty as you would have; no wise person will do so.

But some may say, though the curates be not such good men as we would have them, yet we hope God will pardon us that are their heaters. For answer to this, you may read Isa. ix. 16. 'For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.'

The truth is, the curates is the rightest name that ever they got; they are even such curates as God, by the prophet Jeremiah, speaks of, 'They have healed the wound of the daughter of my people slightly, crying, Peace, peace, where there is no peace.' Whenever they saw a man or woman troubled for sin, O, say they, that is but mad melancholy, God is merciful; you never did ill to any body, what needs

needs you be so feared? And so they cured up the wound slightly. But they forgot that God hath more attributes than one; they never told that he was just and holy, and that without holiness they should never see God; so, in so doing, they did not declare the whole counsel of God; in this they erred. Let a man live as he pleaseth all his life, for a little money they would preach a funeral sermon to him at his death, as if he had been a saint: yea, there are some that will preach funeral sermons to one fifty years after they are dead and gone; in this they err also; for in all the scriptures we never read of a funeral sermon for any of the prophets or apostles; neither was it ever heard told of, but so much as since Popery and Prelacy came to the land. Can any then hear the curates with a good conscience! For their doctrine is full of errors: they will make a people believe they are going to heaven, because they are morally honest; whereas they never knew what it was to enter in at the strait gate of conversion; the pangs of the new birth are wholly unknown to them, without which none shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, John iii. 3. There is a book the curates have among them, which they call, 'The whole duty of man;' which book is a clear discovery of their errors; for in all that book there is nothing but morality preached up. The eminent servant of Christ, Mr James Kirton, very frequently in the pulpit gave his testimony against this book; he said, that it was so far from being the whole duty of man, that it was not the half of the duty of man; for his thoughts were, that the whole duty of man, consisted in receiving Christ; and in all this book there was never a word of Christ, either as to receiving of him, or employing him in any thing whatsoever; and yet they cry up this book before all others. In their preaching up morality to such a pitch, they put an affront on Christ's righteousness. Indeed there can be no true religion without morality, it is impossible, James ii. 14, 25, 26; but there may be many that have morality, that have no true religion, as we may read, Phil. iii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Let us then abhor the curates, and all their ways, and hear them not; for they are such as Christ speaks of, Mat. xv. 9. 'In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.' And let us obey the apostle's exhortation, Col. ii. 20, 21, 22. which is, that we should beware either to 'touch, taste, or handle the doctrines, ordinances, and commandments of men;' for, though they have a show of worship, it is but will worship. Now, let any considerate person, as in the sight of God, declare whether

whether the worship of the Presbyterians, or the worship of the Episcopal, be likeliest to Christ's institutions, and which of them is freest from mens inventions. But some may say, What needs all this ado about our choosing religion? We may be any religion we please; for it will not be asked at the day of judgment, whether you was Episcopal or Presbyterian. For answer to this, as we know neither the day nor the hour when the judgment will be, far less do we know what Christ's procedure against the children of men will be; so then this way of arguing is but a too curious and cunning device to keep the conscience quiet, though full of errors, and ought to be answered with silence; as the wise man says, 'Answer not a fool in his folly.' But, because this is so often in the mouths of these who have an ill informed judgment among us this day, it is fit that something should be said to it.

First, Ye say, what needs all this ado about religion choosing? If religion be such an indifferent thing, what made godly Joshua to be so earnest with the children of Israel, to choose whom they would serve? Josh. xxiv. 15. There seems, there had been a mixed multitude among them, who had never come to a point whom they would serve; therefore he, seeing the evil of this, says to them, 'Chuse this day whom ye will serve: let there be no longer delay; I put it to your choice, either to serve the God of your fathers, or the gods of the Amorites; I will tell you my choice; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' It was no indifferent thing to Joshua. Likewise godly Elijah: in his time there was a people that would not come to a point whom they would serve, 1 Kings xviii. 21. Well, thought he that it was an indifferent thing? No, says he to them, 'how long will ye halt between two opinions? If Baal be God, serve him; if God be God, serve him.' Once put it to a close, whom ye will serve; now, if any of them should have said, it matters not much whom we serve; it will not be asked at the great day, whether we were for Baal, or for God! Surely we would have called them fools. Why then do we condemn that in others, which we justify in ourselves? Therefore, if Prelacy be the way of God, chuse it: and if Presbytery be the way of God, chuse it: only do not halt any longer between two opinions.

Secondly, Whereas you say, it will not be asked at you, at the day of judgment, which of these two you was? (consider it was the saying of a godly minister,) there will be many things laid to our charge that day, that we are little thinking on: for this you may read Mat. xxv. 41, 42, 43. There where

where Christ is judging these on his left hand, he lays things to their charge that they never thought of. 'I was hungry, thirsty, naked, and imprisoned: and you neither fed, clad, nor visited me.

O! say they, 'Lord, when saw we thee that way?' Many things we could have thought would have been asked at us, but we never thought on that. What the Lord will ask at us, we know not: but this we know, that we must give an account of every thought, word and action; and whether we have walked by the rule that he gave us for our direction, or after the customs and inventions of men. It is very observable in this passage of scripture, Mat. xxv. Christ does not say to them on his left-hand, you persecuted me, you imprisoned me, you took away my interest, so as you left me in a starving condition. No, he lays none of those things to their charge: but this only, you did not sympathize with my poor people, when their persecutors did such and such things to them.

From this let us learn, First, Never to own, chuse, or love that religion, which is given to persecution.

2dly, Let us learn, that the omission of duties to the Lord's people, such as, feeding and clothing of them, is as great a sin as if we persecuted them: they shall be recompensed with God's anger, and be cast in utter darkness, at the day of judgment, that have done any evil to the people of God; and likewise he shall do so to them, that have done them no good, when they stood in need of it. Then to be sure Prelacy may fear the day of counting and reckoning, as much as any religion, for what they have done; therefore beware of it: for it hath been a plague to this poor land. O that all the godly, with one consent, would observe these three things concerning Prelacy!

First, Hate and abhor Prelacy, but do not hate the persons who profess this way; do not to them as they have done to you; feed, clad, and provide for them, as far as their necessity calls for, and your ability assists you. Pray for them, that God may convince them in time; and let your godly conversation among them be such, as that, by your meek behaviour, you may win them to the right way.

2dly, Believe no ill of Prelacy, because that others say it: but try it by God's word in all the parts of it; and if it be the right way, keep it; if not, beware of it. The apostle says, Heb. xiii. 9. 'Be not carried away with strange doctrines.' How shall I know strange doctrines? Try them, and follow no man's counsel; follow them that follow Christ.

3dly,

3dly, In all your resolutions against Prelacy, let it be in the strength of Christ; otherwise your resolutions will be like Samson's cords, they will break in the first trial: 'And let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall.' Many one have come great lengths in profession, and yet have made foul defections in their practice: therefore resolve ye, in Christ's strength, 'to be steadfast and immoveable in the way of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.' And come what will, as far as the Lord enables you, with zeal, and prudence, and godly sincerity; 'contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints.'

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

F I N I S.

